Armies of the Vietnam War 1962-75

Text by PHILIP KATCHER

Colour plates by
MIKE CHAPPELL

OSP104
HobbyTown USA
$ 10.95

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES

EDITOR: MARTIN WINDROW

Armies of the Vietnam War 1962-75

Text by PHILIP KATCHER

Colour plates by MIKE CHAPPELL

OSPREY PUBLISHING LONDON

Published in 1980 by
Osprey Publishing Ltd
Member company of the George Philip Group
59 Grosvenor Street, London, W1X 9DA
© Copyright 1980 Osprey Publishing Ltd
Reprinted 1981, 1982 (twice), 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990

All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study,research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act, 1988, no part of this publication may he reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be addressed to the Publishers.

ISBN o 85045 360 7

Filmset in Great Britain
Printed in Hong Kong

Select Bibliography

Asprcy, Robert B., *War in the Shadows*, New York 1975
O'Ballance, Edgar, *The Wars in Vietnam*, London 1975
Caputo, Philip, *A Rumor of War*, New York 1977
Dawson, Alan, *55 Days*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1977
Donlon, Roger H. C, *Outpost of Freedom*, New York 1965
Herbert, Anthony B., *Soldier*, New York 1973
Huggett, William T., *Body Count*, New York 1973
Terzani, Tiziano, *Giai Phong!*, New York 1976

Historical Background

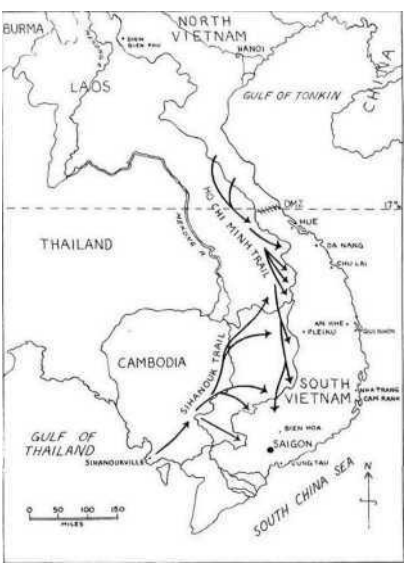
In 1954 an international agreement divided Vietnam, formerly part of French Indo-China, in half at the 17th Parallel. The northern half was ruled by communist-nationalist Ho Chi Minh, while the non-communist south was at first ruled by Annam's former emperor, Bao Dai, who was deposed by NgO Dinh Diem in 1955. Part of the agreement called for a general election in Vietnam to reunify the country, but Diem refused unless there were 'free' elections in the north and, with American support, a year later he refused to hold elections at all.

Diem's decision prompted the return of many southerners who had been training in the north. With local support they formed an underground organization generally called the 'Viet Cong', or 'Vietnamese communists'. They began a terrorist campaign, killing government officials. On 8 July 1958 the VC made their first large-scale attack of the war, raiding an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) outpost near Bien Hoa, in which action one US Army advisor was killed and another wounded.

On 20 December 1960 the VC were formed into the National Liberation Front (NLF) as part of an overall plan which called for guerrilla warfare to win control of the countryside, as opposed to a North Korean-style regular invasion across the 17th Parallel. The NLF set up a three-part army with a main force, or regular army; a regional militia; and village militias. The militias could be called out only for limited times and within limited areas. Supplies and, indeed, much of the manpower for the NLF came from the north, although to keep this secret all wore the universal black 'pyjamas' of South Vietnam's peasants, and they left all material indicating northern origins behind.

The Diem government hid news of NLF successes, so that it was not until an American fact-finding tour late in 1960 that the Americans realized the extent of the problem. While few wanted to commit US ground troops to an Asian conflict, advisory and financial aid to the south was immediately raised. Nevertheless, the NLF continued to grow stronger, aided by northern reinforcements coming down the 'Ho Chi Minh Trail', a roundabout series of rough roads down

Sketch map of Vietnam, showing NLF supply routes from the North and through Cambodia. (Rebecca Katcher)



the west side of Vietnam and passing through part of Laos. On 16 July 1961 they even engaged two entire ARVN battalions for some time before pulling back. The ARVN, however, was getting better itself, forcing the NLF to change their tactics to a programme of taking over villages one at a time.

On 8 February 1962 the small US Military Advisory and Assistance Group, Vietnam, was formally changed into the US Military Advisory Command in Vietnam **(MACV)** under General Paul D. Harkins. By October 1963 the command included 16,732 American troops, all in support and non-combatant roles.

Following the defeat of an ARVN regiment by an NLF battalion in January 1963, the Americans advised Diem to switch to small-unit tactics. Diem refused, fearing the results of increased casualty lists on an already restless public. Feeling that their advice was generally being ignored, the Americans planned to pull their troops out by 1965.

Although Diem was re-elected president in 1961, he narrowly avoided a coup, and he and his corrupt family were becoming unpopular with both the Americans and the Vietnamese. In November 1963 a group of generals, encouraged by the Americans, overthrew Diem. By 1964 the country had gone through a series of seven governments before finally finding several military men who satisfied both civilians and military.

These Warrant Officer candidates wear the green winter walking-out dress of the US Army. The shoulder patch on the right-hand man is that of the US Army Primary Helicopter School, while the black helicopter symbol on an orange shield worn on the right sleeve by the others indicate that they are training to become pilots. Orange shoulder-strap loops with the school crest pinned on indicate senior students, shortly to be appointed warrant officers W1. (Author's photo)

In 1964 Lieutenant-General William C. Westmoreland, who had been given command of MACV, requested American combat troops to guard American installations. Westmoreland's qualifications to command MACV were not particularly obvious. He was an artillery officer, later an airborne infantry division commander, with no experience, training or apparent interest in fighting a guerrilla war. He was, at best, very conventional.

By 1964 the NLF were growing so confident that they largely abandoned their clandestine 'black pyjama' peasant dress in favour of frankly military olive green shirts and trousers. It was obvious to American policy-makers that if Vietnam were to stay non-communist American troops would have to go into action themselves. On 2 August 1964 the US destroyer *Maddox*, sailing off North Vietnam, was attacked by three small North Vietnamese boats. Although there were no casualties, the American government had an excuse to go into action.

On 8 March 1965 some 3,500 US Marines, the first US combat troops to arrive in Vietnam, landed in Da Nang to defend the US air base there. On 8 June, following further reinforcements, General Westmoreland authorized his troops to begin 'offensive patrolling'. On the 8th, too, some 800 Australians, followed shortly by a New Zealand artillery battery, arrived to join in the war. On 28 June the first 'search and destroy' sweep was made by a combined US, ANZ and

ARVN force. The US 1st Infantry Division landed in July, and troops of the US 101st Airborne Division shortly thereafter. The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) arrived in An Khe in September 1965. America was totally committed to the war.

The American plan was to set up heavily fortified base camps along the coast, at Phu Bai, Da Nang, Chui Lai, Qui Nhon and Cam Rahn, from where troops would be sent out on what amounted to large raids or 'reconnaissance in force'. While believing that they had radically different tactics from those of the French, who had been beaten on the same ground by the same enemy ten years earlier, in fact the Americans simply became as tied to their helicopters as the French had been to the roads. Americans alone in the bush felt disoriented, and simply did not act with the same aggressiveness as the NLF. The usual result of a sweep was that the NLF would fall back after putting up a short 'fire-fight', only to return after the Americans and ARVNs had returned to their safe bases. The countryside remained under communist control.

The Americans felt it would take three full divisions to completely shut down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Rather than commit so many men in terrain where they could not be saved if they were encircled, as the French had been in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu, the Americans decided to rely on bombing the Trail to the point where it could not be used. The air war became, and remained until the end, one of America's main efforts.

In May 1965, responding to growing American participation, North Vietnam sent its first regular troops south to aid the NLF. On 14 November 1965 a full NVA regiment, with NLF aid, attacked a US 1st Cavalry position near Plei Me. The fight went back and forth, with the Viets making a total of five separate attacks, all of which were beaten off. Casualties on both sides were heavy, and both sides regarded the fight — the first between US and NVA regulars— as a victory.

At the end of 1965 the US had 180,000 troops in South Vietnam. The North matched this growth, slipping whole divisions down the Ho Chi Minh Trail despite heavy American bombing. By October 1966 North Vietnam's 324B, 325th, 341st and 610th Infantry Divisions were in the south, as well as 67,000 NLF main force troops and an additional 205,000 militia and support troops.

Foreign Troops in Vietnam, July 1967

Unit	*Base*
3rd US Marine Division	Phu Bai
1st US Marine Division	Da Nang
Task Force 'Oregon' (US):	Chu Lai
3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division	
196th Light Infantry Brigade	
1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division	
2nd ROK Marine Brigade	Chu Lai
4th US Infantry Division	Pleiku
173rd Airborne Brigade (US)	Pleiku
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)	An Khe
1st ROK Infantry Division	Qui Nhon
9th ROK Infantry Division	Nha Trang
5th US Special Forces Group (Airborne)	Nha Trang
199th Light Infantry Brigade (US)	Song Be
11th US Armoured Cavalry Regiment	Xuan Luc
Republic of the Philippines Contingent	Bien Hoa
1st US Infantry Division	Di An
9th US Infantry Division	Long Thanh
Royal Thai Military Assistance Group	Saigon
1st ANZ Task Force	Vung Tau
25th US Infantry Division	Cu Chi

The basic pattern of the war did not change, however. On 25 January 1966 US, ARVN and, for the first time, South Korean troops swept the Bong Son area as NLF and NVA troops fell back out of their path. Although 140,000 people were said to have been 'freed' from communist control, it was admitted that the NLF immediately took back control of the area as soon as the allies returned to their bases. This sweep was simply one of a continuing series, the characteristics of which became depressingly similar, conducted between 1965 and 1970. During the same period communist forces conducted a steady series of attacks against fortified positions—attacks which were usually more costly to them than their

enemy. There were no 'front lines', save around the perimeters of base camps, and operations swirled throughout the countryside like water in a creek.

In late 1967 the NLF besieged a 3,500-strong US Marine force at Khe Sahn, with the 325C and 304th NVA Divisions surrounding the base while the 320th Division cut reinforcement routes from the north-east. The action at Khe Sahn, which at the time threatened to become another Dien Bien Phu, as the NVA planned, was quickly forgotten as on 30 January 1968 the NVA launched their 'Tet Offensive'. By 5 February no less than 30 of the 44 Provincial Capitals, including the old national capital city of Hue, had fallen to the communists. Infiltrators even managed to get into the well-defended compound of the US Embassy in Saigon, although they all died in the process. Elsewhere in Saigon fighting was heavy for some days before the capital city was cleared. The main battle was for Hue, a battle which lasted three weeks and virtually destroyed the city in the process. Later it was discovered that, while in control of Hue, the communists had killed more than a thousand civilians, often with great cruelty—a fact which made them a considerable number of enemies among the South Vietnamese, and which they later admitted was a grave error. By 26 February the Tet Offensive was finished. The communists admitted over Radio Hanoi that it had been a failure. The expected general uprising in their support had not happened; the ARVN had fought back astonishingly bravely. At best the communists had made some minor gains in rural areas.

Staff sergeant, 864th Engineer Bn. (Construction), 1965, wearing the issued pith helmet and early non-tropical fatigue uniform with MACV shoulder patch. Two ammunition pouches and an M-14 bayonet are worn on the pistol belt. (Author's photo)

The NVA continued to besiege Khe Sahn; relief was, however, on the way. On 1 April 1968 the US 1st Cavalry was 10 miles east of the post, and by 7 April they were there. NVA attacks continued, but the chance for another Dien Bien Phu, if there ever had been one, was gone. (It should be noted that ARVN units defending the K.he Sahn perimeter alongside US troops fought with great determination, beating off the few major infantry attacks by NVA units.)

On 13 May 1968 peace talks between South Vietnam, the US, the NLF and North Vietnam began in Paris. American public opinion, shocked by the ferocity of the Tet Offensive, conducted by an enemy they had been told were virtually out of the war, turned against the government. In March General Westmoreland was returned to the US as the Army's Chief of Staff—an interesting promotion for someone with his record—and General Creighton Abrams Jnr., who had been his deputy, replaced him. General Abrams had spent most of his time in Vietnam working with the ARVN, and was to an extent responsible for its vastly improved performance during the Tet fighting. On taking command General Abrams made sure the ARVN received better equipment, while generally switching to smaller unit tactics. Such moves sat well with an American public thoroughly sick of the war.

Recognizing this feeling, the newly elected President Richard M. Nixon announced that by 15 December 1969 35,000 US troops would be withdrawn from Vietnam, to be followed by another 50,000 in April 1970. By January 1970, however, the US had 300,000 combat and 180,000 support troops in South Vietnam. As the Americans pulled out, so did the NVA, while the NLF returned to small-scale actions. Everyone

was waiting for the Americans to be gone.

In order to give time to the South Vietnamese, so that they could continue building up their own forces, the US launched one last grand ground offensive, this one against the reported NLF headquarters, defended by two NLF divisions, inside neighbouring Cambodia. On 1 May 1970 a joint US/ARVN force swept into Cambodia, meeting little resistance and turning up vast quantities of weapons, food and clothing. The invasion raised a public outcry in the United States, however, and the last US troops had returned to Vietnam by 29 June. The last ARVN troops returned by early August.

Pleased with the results of the Cambodia invasion, the ARVN launched an attack into Laos on 8 February 1971 to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail. No US forces, except air forces, were involved and, facing heavy resistance and bad weather, the ARVN drive was stopped short of actually cutting the Trail. Using Russian-supplied armour, the NVA cut into the advance, overrunning forward positions. Reinforcements were sent to the ARVN, but the advance was hopelessly stalled and the last ARVN troops were withdrawn from Laos by 25 March.

In 1971-72 the bulk of the Americans, Australians, New Zealanders and South Koreans returned to their homes; and on 30 March 1972 the North Vietnamese and NLF began a major offensive, driving south across the 17th Parallel, east from Cambodia, south from the Central Highlands, and rising up in the Binh and Quang Ngai provinces. In many areas ARVN units simply folded without a fight, usually after their senior officers fled in helicopters. In other areas they fought very well. The Americans used their air and sea power to attempt to relieve pressure on the ARVN, but refused to return their ground troops to the fight. On 11 August 1972 the last American ground troops, who had been guarding the same Da Nang air base where the first American troops had gone into action, were withdrawn. On 1 March the last Australian and New Zealand combat troops returned home, while the last of the 1,200 Thais had returned to Thailand by 30 July 1971. The last South Korean troops left by June 1973.

On 27 January 1973 a peace agreement was

Private First Class Stanley F. Tipton wears the issued "baseball' cap with stiffened front; he is cradling an M-14 rifle. (Author's photo)

The colonel commanding the and Brigade, US 1st Infantry Division, reviews his men as they land in Vietnam in July 1965. The blue and white brigade patch is worn on the left shirt pocket, and the 'Big Red One' divisional patch on the left sleeve. (Author's photo)

Good rear view of an 18th Infantry soldier, showing 'butt pack' worn on the pistol belt, with a 'window' for the owner's name on the top surface; the arrangement of the webbing suspenders; and two canteens hanging from the pack. Regimental crests are pinned to the baseball caps. (Author's photo)

signed in Paris calling for the complete withdrawal of foreign forces, a four-party international military mission to South Vietnam, and a halting of opposing forces where they were. On 15 March 1973 MACV was closed down, and on 29 March the last American advisors left Tan Son Nhut Airport, outside Saigon.

The communists continued small-scale attacks after the agreement was signed, but it was not until December 1974 that they planned any major offensives. Their plan then was to attack in Phuoc Long, a Central Highlands province, as a test of ARVN abilities. On 2 January 1975 the siege of Phuoc Binh, the provincial capital, began. By May the entire province had been captured, the first to fall completely under communist rule.

The fall of this Highlands province had results which amazed both sides. South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to abandon all of the Highlands, pulling his troops back to the coast and around Saigon. Although the ARVN generals disagreed with this plan, President Thieu insisted on it. The retreat turned into a rout, destroying much of the last remaining vestiges of ARVN morale. In March Pleiku, the sight of much heavy fighting in the past, was abandoned. Once the ARVN started running it found it hard to stop.

On 22 March communist shells fell on Hue, now held by the 1st Infantry Division—some of Saigon's best troops—and units of Rangers-some of Saigon's worst. On 25 March a whole 1st Division battalion defected to the communist side, causing the orders to go out to give up the city and retreat south. The 1st Regiment, 1st Division, covered the retreat, fighting like the outstanding unit it was.

On 31 March Da Nang fell; Qui Nhon fell on 1 April, followed rapidly by Nha Trang and Cam Ranh. It was finally at Xuan Loc, some 40 miles north-east of Saigon, that the ARVN made a stand. That town, on Route 1, was held by an 18th Infantry Division regiment. The men of the 18th, which had been considered one of the poorest ARVN units, fell back under pressure from the 6th NVA Division, but then mounted a counter-attack, driving the northerners back. Only a few reinforcements arrived at Xuan Loc before the NVA cut Route 1 to the south, but the 18th held on bravely. Finally, after holding out for six days surrounded by four NVA divisions, Xuan Loc fell.

Saigon was left with three divisions to guard it, the 5th, 9th and 25th. Communist forces moved to encircle the city; the government fell, and the new government surrendered without a fight. On 1 May 1975, the traditional communist May Day, South Vietnam was completely in communist hands.

Uniforms The U.S. Army

For field or fatigue wear the newly enlisted soldier in the US Army in 1962 received four pairs of heavy olive green cotton trousers, made with a pocket at each hip, and two back pockets with buttoned flaps. He received four fatigue shirts made of heavy olive green cotton, with a pocket with a buttoned flap on each breast. Fatigue shirts were made with cuffless, tube-like sleeves, but around 1964 the Army began issuing shirts with narrow cufis fastened with a button. Buttons were plain olive green plastic. A black tape, 4¼in. long and an inch wide, with the yellow embroidered words 'U.S. ARMY' in letters 3/4in. in height, was worn over the left pocket, while a similar-sized white tape with the owner's name in black block letters was worn over the right. Some qualification badges —Combat or Expert Infantryman, pilot's wings or parachute wings— were worn over the U.S. ARMY tape. If all three were worn, one - and different people chose different ones—was worn under the tape on the pocket flap itself. The unit insignia patch was worn on the left shoulder, if for a division or larger, and the left pocket under the flap if smaller. If he had seen service in a combat zone the soldier wore the patch of the unit he had served with at that time on the right shoulder. Other qualification flashes, such as for Ranger or Airborne troops, were worn on the left shoulder over the shoulder patch. (Information specialists in Korea also wore 'OFFICIAL U.S. ARMY CORRESPONDENT' in yellow letters on a black flash over their shoulder patch on the left arm.) White cotton high-necked T-shirts were worn under the fatigue shirts.

Men of the 18th Infantry slog ashore in July 1965, displaying the front of the webbing harness. They wear 'intermediate' fatigues, the first tropical pattern, identifiable by the exposed buttons on the slanted pockets. In this view the ancestry of the M-14 rifle in the old Garand M-1 is very apparent. (Author's photo)

Rank and grade insignia were worn on fatigue shirts. Officers wore their rank insignia on their right collars. These consisted of a gold bar with two brown rectangles for warrant officer, W1; a gold bar with three brown rectangles for chief warrant officer, W2; a silver bar with two brown rectangles for chief warrant officer, W3, and a silver bar with three brown rectangles for chief warrant officer, W4. On 1 December 1972 warrant officer insignia was changed, giving the warrant officer W1 a single black square on a silver bar, and every higher grade thereafter another black square, up to four squares, all on silver bars.

A second lieutenant wore a gold bar; a first lieutenant, a silver bar, and a captain, two silver bars. A major wore a gold oak leaf; a lieutenant-colonel, a silver oak leaf, and a colonel, a silver eagle. A brigadier-general wore a silver star; a major-general, two stars; a lieutenant-general, three stars, and a general, four stars.

Styles of US Army insignia of the war. *Top,* the Sp4's yellow eagle on a dark olive green backing. *Left,* a full-colour shoulder patch, here the red MACV shield with yellow edge, 'walls' and hilt and white blade. *Centre,* blackened metal Sp4 insignia worn on both shirt collar points from about 1968. *Right,* 'subdued' shoulder patch, in this case that of 1st Logistical Command, in black and olive green. *Bottom,* 'subdued' black-on-green version of the Combat Infantryman badge. (Author's photo)

Generals wore their rank insignia on both collars. Other officers wore their branch of service insignia—such as a turreted castle for engineers, crossed rifles for infantry, a diamond for pay corps, etc.—on their left collars. Warrant officers wore a gold eagle within a wreath. Officers often wore their unit numbers over their branch of service insignia, such as '864' for the 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction). Both rank and branch of service insignia were usually in white- or yellow-coloured thread embroidered on an olive green cotton backing, although metal insignia as worn on walking out dress (Class A uniform) could also be worn on fatigues.

The two lowest private ranks, E1 and E2, had no insignia at first. A private first class (Pfc) wore a single yellow chevron, point up, on each sleeve above the elbow. In 1966 the rank of private E2 was given the old Pfc chevron, and the Pfc E3 grade was marked by a single chevron above an arc or 'rocker'. Most men who made E4 were graded Specialist Four (Sp4) and wore a yellow eagle on each sleeve. The specialist grade did not carry non-commissioned officer responsibilities and served only to mark the pay grade. Corporal was also an E4 grade, but corporals appeared mostly in combat units.

There were two separate chains of promotion for the enlisted grades, equal in pay if not responsibilities. The specialists who, as they went higher in grade, were mostly in technical, non-combat positions, wore a yellow eagle on each sleeve. The Sp5 wore a yellow arc above his eagle; the Sp6, two yellow arcs; the Sp7, three arcs; the Sp8, three arcs above and one chevron, point down, below the eagle, and the Sp9, three arcs above and two chevrons below.

The grades above corporal were sergeant, who had three yellow chevrons, points up; staff sergeant, three chevrons and a rocker below; sergeant first class, three chevrons and two rockers; and master sergeant, three chevrons and three rockers. The master sergeant E8 and the first sergeant E8 were in the same pay grades, but the latter title and insignia was given only to NCOs who served as company or battery first sergeants. They wore the master sergeant's insignia with a diamond in the middle. Above them all was the sergeant-major, who wore three chevrons, three rockers and a star in between. In 1964 the grade of command sergeant-major was created with the sergeant-major's insignia, but with a yellow wreath around the star.

Any individual, officer or NCO, who held a combat command, from squad to corps level, wore a green cloth loop, 1 5/8 in. wide, round the middle of both epaulettes on the service coat, jacket, overcoat or shirt when worn as an outer garment.

In 1964 a new-style fatigue cap was issued, an olive green 'baseball' cap made with a stiffened front and visor. These replaced the blocked olive green caps which were never issued but which the men were required to buy and wear. The change was not greatly appreciated by the troops, however, as the new caps rapidly became shapeless and unsightly, while the old stiff caps were always neat and soldierly. Two other caps were issued on joining the Army; a lightweight, olive green cotton visored cap which was worn only for kitchen duties in basic training and never thereafter, and a heavy olive green cap with wool-lined ear flaps, which was usually not allowed.

Officers wore their rank badges on their cap fronts. Enlisted men wore their unit crests, small metal and enamel unit insignias, on their cap fronts. Some non-commissioned officers wore metal replicas of their chevrons on their cap fronts.

Two pairs of combat boots were issued to every recruit. These were all-black leather, and laced up the front. Soles were heavy black leather. Most men replaced the flimsy fabric boot laces with black rawhide. In 1964 a new style of combat boot was first issued; this was made one bootlace hole shorter, and without the separate, heavy toe-cap which had been part of the older boots. The old toe-caps tended to cut into the toes when the boots began to curl after much use. Boots were supposed to be rotated, i.e. a different pair worn every day, and in many basic training companies the soldier had one of his pairs of boots marked on the heels, usually with white paint, so it could be quickly seen if he were rotating his boots. These marks, of course, survived long after training ended.

Belts were black web, with a brass keep at one end. Brass rectangular buckles, which were to be kept highly polished, were issued. Some units noticed a gig line', a line running down shirt front, the right edge of the belt buckle, and the trouser fly, and insisted that their members keep their 'gig lines' straight.

Virtually all officers and many enlisted men modified their issued fatigue clothing. The most common modification was taking in seams to make the very baggy clothes fit better. The tailors found on all Army posts offered these services cheaply. Many men, especially those who had been stationed in the Orient where tailoring services were very cheap, had pen and cigarette packet pockets added on their sleeves above the elbows. (There were already two pen slots in the issue shirts' breast pockets, and the flaps were slitted so the pens could be carried without opening the pocket flaps.) Some men had zippers put into the insides of their combat boots so that they could be laced permanently in a fancy 'airborne' pattern, while the soldier could get into and out of his boots quickly and easily by using the zipper.

In August 1964 General Westmoreland requested an army engineer group to prepare facilities for the troop build-up he planned. The 35th Engineer Group was sent, making its headquarters at Cam Ranh Bay. The battalion actually doing the building at Cam Ranh was the 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction), of which the author was a member. The battalion's advance party, led by commander Lieutenant-Colonel James Bunch, arrived in May 1965, while the rest of the battalion slogged onto Cam Ranh's sandy beaches during a rainstorm on 9 June.

The immediate problem was the heat – sometimes reaching 120º Fahrenheit in the sun. According to 35th Group orders, the soldiers wore tropical sun helmets and were allowed to remove their jackets and work in T-shirts. The helmets were light khaki with a green-lined brim. Officers put the brass eagles from their Class A 'round' hats on their helmet fronts, while some enlisted men put battalion crests on theirs. Headquarters Company's commander planned to obtain locally made metal enlisted rank badges which would be worn on helmet fronts by all enlisted men. After a month or so everyone stopped wearing the bulky and uncomfortable

Lieutenant-General William Westmoreland generally wore highly starched fatigues; Combat Infantryman's and Senior Parachutist's badges are worn above the left pocket, and the MACV patch is on his shoulder. The parachutist's badge and stars on his 'baseball' cap are silver metal, but the rest of the insignia are embroidered. (Author's photo)

Men of 1st Bn., 8th Artillery fire their 105mm towed howitzer from a fire support base near Trang Bang, September 1968. (US Army)

helmets, preferring the issue caps, and the plan was not carried out. The issue caps were not usually liked that much more, and some men were able to obtain better-made, lighter-weight, locally produced cotton versions of the fatigue cap. Many of them had their rank insignia embroidered in yellow thread on the fronts. Others, including the author, managed to obtain the lightweight cotton version of the issue cap worn by aviators.

The 864th left the United States in the issue heavy cotton fatigues, but on arrival everyone was issued new lightweight tropical fatigues. These were made with slanted pocket flaps which had the buttons exposed, unlike later versions which had the buttons hidden so they would not catch on equipment belts. As it turned out, there were not enough of certain sizes to go around, so many of the men were unable to wear their new uniforms for some time. Some men received one uniform item, such as the shirt, but not the other. Since it was against regulations to wear a tropical shirt with a pair of heavy cotton trousers, the owners of one piece of tropical uniform were out of luck until they could obtain the rest of the uniform.

The shirts were issued without any type of insignia on them. A few men wrote their names with black felt-tipped pens over their right pockets — although there was considerable confusion as to wlicther they should run parallel with the slanted pockets, or straight across the chest as on the regular fatigue shirts. A few men obtained shoulder patches, although it was unclear in most minds if the 864th came under MACV or the 1st Logistical Command. The 35th Group commander wore a '1st Log' patch, while most other officers and men wore MACV patches. 4th Army patches had been removed from fatigue shirts in the 864th prior to leaving Texas, but the U.S. ARMY and name tags were left on.

(The 864th also received, thanks to a clever

supply officer, issue sunglasses for the whole battalion. These were carried in dark blue plastic holsters worn on the waistbelt on the right hip. The sunglasses themselves were the aviator's design, with thin gold rims. While the engineers' eyes were thus protected from the sun, many flyers and military police were unable to obtain such glasses. As a result the sunglasses made good trading material. A pair of sunglasses traded with a military policeman from Saigon brought the author the tropical trousers he had been unable to obtain from proper supply channels!)

The first troops in Vietnam received tropical combat boots made like the Second World War 'double-buckle' combat boot, but in grey-green canvas and brown leather. Only the toe, heel, and strips where the boot was laced and buckled were leather. Some men tried to blacken the leather with boot polish but most left them alone. The boots were all marked with contract dates from the early 1950s. Many of the 864th men found that the old boots' rubber soles split apart on Cam Ranh's hot sands, and discarded them in favour of their issue black boots. A few officers and NCOs managed to get the newer tropical combat boot, made with a black leather toe, heel and strips along the sides for lace holes and up the back, and green synthetic material elsewhere. These were quite rare in 1965, however. The situation had not improved a year later, according to Sp4 Larry Hughes of the 937th Engineer Group (Construction): 'Jungle boots had first been distributed to the infantry,' he wrote, 'as more arrived the boots were given to all American units. But I hadn't received jungle boots. Many of the Group's units were not receiving jungle boots. The crime of it was the same guys need, only have so many piastres and a pass into Qui Nhon. There they could walk into any one of many Vietnamese stores and buy a pair of American-made jungle boots.'

Because of the heat most men discarded T-shirts and many even stopped wearing underpants, which caused heat rash. Watches and 'dog tags' were often worn from a shirt buttonhole.

Many soldiers obtained locally made broad-brimmed olive green bush hats, with a snap on the left side so they could be worn Australian-Style. These were strictly forbidden in the 864th.

Not only did infantrymen receive the newer-style jungle boots, but they also turned in two of their white T-shirts prior to departure to have them dyed and returned olive green. These olive green T-shirts were authorized outer wear in most non-combat situations.

In August 1968 each major command in Vietnam was allowed to choose if they were to issue 'subdued' shoulder patches or continue wearing their old brightly coloured patches. The subdued patches were all olive green with black designs on them. Not all commands chose to use subdued patches; those which did not were the 1st Infantry Division; 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), 1st Brigade; 82nd Airborne Division, 3rd Brigade, and 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). Officers' insignia and non-commissioned officers' chevrons were also issued in black on olive green. By 1968, however, many

A heavily-laden 'grunt' lugs an M-60 machine gun up a steep slope during a search-and-destroy mission, May 1969. His waist and pack are festooned with ammo belts; a belt-fed machine gun requires some exposed 'ready' ammunition to be carried, but in strong sunlight their glitter can be seen too clearly for tactical safety. A canteen is clipped to the rucksack. Note towel round neck, and matchbooks in helmet band. (US Army)

The realities of warfare in swamp-jungle: a soldier of the 47th Infantry, 9th Division, fords a stream near My Tho, April 1968. Smokes, matches and towel are slipped under the helmet band, and a claymore bag is slung round the body. (US Army)

enlisted men were wearing small black metal replicas of their sleeve insignia on both shirt collars instead of the chevrons.

Within a few years a fairly standard US Army field uniform had been evolved. Major Terry Carlson, of the 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, writes: 'Uniforms were ridiculous. The Division CO said he wanted all insignia worn in the field, because, as rumour had it, he once looked after a fight and asked who the CO was. It was the man he asked, who got his butt chewed because he bore no insignia. If we operated for less than three days out of a base camp we wore our non-subdued Big Red One [shoulder patch], name tag and U.S. ARMY, and pin-on brass [metal rank insignia] and CIB [Combat Infantryman Badge] on our pockets. If three days or more, our laundry was direct exchanged via chopper from a laundry which took care of several divisions, so you had to hope for something in your size and often got fatigues from the 9th, 101st and 25th Divisions. Sometimes we carried felt-tip pens to colour in our required insignia on blank fatigues in case of "brass" visiting. It got to be a joke.

'Most of us also wore an OD towel around our necks for wiping sweat, and mostly for holding the forward guard of the weapon in a fight when it got hot.

'Our reconnaissance platoons were issued GI camouflaged pattern jungle fatigues, and were allowed to purchase the "flap" hat or whatever variety they chose. Other units were restricted to standard OD jungle fatigues and steel pots. None of our people wore "tiger stripes"! In reality, I'd say most of our troops wore "flap" or "boonie" hats in certain circumstances, but mostly had their helmets hanging from their canteens or close by. I myself wore a camouflaged "boonie" hat, especially in night ambushes, and I always allowed my people to do so, as long as steel pots were on hand in case of a fight and no "brass" were around to chew tail.'

The camouflage suits came in two basic patterns, with a wide variety among those, and were both locally and American-made. The 'tiger suits' were usually marked with large black stripes with shades of green and brown around them. The other basic pattern was made in more of a 'leaf pattern, with browns and greens as the main colours.

The use of such suits, as well as bush hats, was restricted officially to few Americans, although most wanted them. Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony B. Herbert, who had very few good words to say about the US Army's efforts in Vietnam, commanded the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment there, and noted that one of his company commanders always wore a set of 'tiger stripe' fatigues. 'He had been wearing it when I joined the battalion, along with a hell of a lot of others in the Brigade. But I suppose [Brigadier-General John W.] Barnes had to make his mark, too, and he didn't like the tiger suits. He didn't wear one and so nobody would. The General had forced

everyone in the Brigade, except the recon people, to get rid of them, and almost everybody had complied except [Captain Jim] Grimshaw, and one or two guys in each of the other battalions. Nobody really gave a damn. If a man felt more comfortable wearing one or it inspired him to fight a little better, what the hell? Wear it. Now, all at once, it was important.'

The thing that most annoyed many who liked the camouflage pattern uniforms was that in Saigon, as Colonel Herbert said: ' . . . thousands of chairborne commandos [were] running around all starched and wearing—you guessed it—tiger suits. Out in the grass, where it might have been of some value to fighting men because of its camouflage markings, it wasn't available. In Saigon, it was the uniform of the day. The same phenomenon applied to the bush hat. You couldn't get them, much less wear them, in the 173rd Brigade, but in Saigon even the typists at the Capital Military Assistance Command Headquarters had them.'

Despite such strict regulations, the troops of the late 1960s and early 1970s were not too military-looking anyway. Colonel Herbert felt the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which was said to be the 'cream of the crop', was 'garbage'. In their main camp at An Khe he found: '. . . the troops wore what they damn well wanted to wear, including beads and bracelets. They capped their teeth with different colors—red, blue, and gold . . .' They also printed obscene mottoes on their helmet covers and flak jackets. This was not, felt Colonel Herbert, the way to run an army. 'A

Almost indistinguishable from the mud they lie in, tired men of the 47th Infantry wait while artillery knocks out a Viet Cong machine gun bunker which has them pinned down on the tree line near My Tho, April 1968. (US Army)

good soldier wears even the most ragged gear well. Even in the field, he is trim, neat and tight, with pockets buttoned and no loose or hanging straps or webbing. He does not wear sunglasses. He keeps a clean face and a clean weapon and clean ammunition.'

Most infantrymen were drafted into an unpopular war, against their will, and their main interest was simply to survive the year's tour of duty they had to serve in Vietnam. Many officers simply did not try to change this attitude. Even a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Captain Brian Utermahlen, Class of 1968, was quoted in *Life* Magazine when he was an infantry company commander in October 1970 as saying he had a 'relaxed' view of military appearance. 'What they wear or look like out in the field is very low in my list of priorities,' he told ***Life's*** reporter. 'It's one of the compromises I make. As long as a man does his job, I don't care if he wears peace beads or symbols, or if he shaves.'

Walter H. Bradford, a platoon leader in Company B, 1st Battalion, 77th Armor in 1969-70, wrote that jewellery, '. . . peace symbol medallions, love beads, and the like —all Vietnamese products—were the nemesis of troop commanders, but still commonly seen, since they reflected the sub-culture of the young troops'.

The basic accoutrements carried throughout the period were hung on an olive green web pistol belt, made with eyelets all round into which accoutrement items could be hooked. A pair of shoulder braces was worn with it. On each front hip was a large pouch, capable of holding two M-14 rifle ammunition clips. On the right front was a snapped-shut first aid packet, containing an olive green, foil-wrapped set of bandages. On one hip was an olive green canvas container holding a water-bottle. The basic model in 1965 was aluminium with a black top, but thereafter virtually all troops carried green plastic water-bottles. A large olive green canvas haversack, with a clear plastic-covered slot into which the owner's name could be inserted, was worn on the belt at the small of the back. A dark green poncho was often worn rolled up on top of that.

Major Carlson says that in the 18th Infantry, and as far as he saw in virtually every other infantry outfit, the field dress consisted of 'Standard jungle fatigues, helmet with camouflage cover and camouflage band. Field pack [rucksacks were not usually carried], pistol belt, as many canteens as you could carry, about four ammo pouches, first aid pouch [one or two], poncho liner rolled up on back of pack. The Division was hyper about grenades other than smoke grenades, and directed that they be carried in a container [i.e. empty canteen pouch or claymore bag].* The troops followed this rule for safety's sake, and many also carried their M-14 or M-16 magazines or M-79 rounds in an empty claymore bag. I sent home for my GI Second World War two- and three-pouch grenade carriers, and found them perfect for carrying frags or smoke or WP. Some troops carried bandoliers of M-16 ammo around their chest or waist. Nobody carried M-60 ammo loose, because it wasn't "tactical" with all that bright gold hanging around, and it got the ammo dirty RTOs carried extra radio batteries strapped to the PRC25S or 77s, and always in the rainy season had an empty plastic battery bag around the radio handset, secured with a rubber band because when the handsets got wet they failed to operate. The RTOs didn't like headsets, because

M-113 armoured personnel carrier—'track'—of the 16th Infantry Regiment, posted on Highway 13 in November 1968. The wire fencing screen is a portable defence against RPG rounds, carried on the vehicle and erected if stopped for any length of time. (Major Terry Carlson)

*Simple fabric haversack with shoulder-strap, for carrying 'Claymore' directorial anti-personnel mine, and when empty much used as an all-purpose carry-all.

Heavily-equipped soldiers of Co. 'C', 1st Bn., 18th Infantry, 1st Division, man a machine gun position on their perimeter during an action near Tan Uyen, August 1969. (US Army)

when wearing them they couldn't hear oral commands not coming in over the radio. Claymores were carried in their appropriate bags. Star clusters and illumination flares were carried either in claymore bags or strapped onto radios, or in the "butt packs".

'Our officers had to write to the Infantry School bookstore in order to get map cases, which were never available in South Vietnam. Compasses were normally carried in their proper pouch or at least in the upper fatigue shirt pocket. M-60 ammo was carried in issue ammo boxes with a "carry-all" strap added so they could be carried across the shoulder . . . Starlight scopes were carried via a sling over the shoulder, and never mounted to a rifle . . . Knife carrying was uncontrolled, and varied dramatically. Most who carried one had a sharpened bayonet or a K-Bar. I carried a K-Bar in a grey Navy fibreglass sheath which I brought from the States . . . I liked a claymore bag for grenades and magazines, because it made it easy to take ammo from a wounded man and forward it to others without digging through ammo pouches. Officers and NCOs had strobe lights scrounged from the Air Force.'

The infantryman's basic weapon was the rifle. Rifles had changed rapidly in the early years of the war. Soldiers taking basic training in 1962 trained on Second World War M-1 rifles. Soldiers taking basic training in 1963 learned about the M-14 rifles; within four years the M-14 had itself been replaced by the M-16.

The M-14 was basically an improved M-1. Designed in 1952, it was a .30 cal. rifle capable of full- or semi-automatic fire. It was lighter than the M-1 when empty, because a flimsy plastic top had been used on the stock, which was also shorter than that of the M-1. Once the large 20-round magazine had been inserted it was about the same weight as the M-1.

The M-16, on the other hand, was a radically

different weapon. It was 6 1/2lb weight of metal and plastic, firing a .223 cal. bullet with tremendous shock power. Sergeant John Black, who received an M-16 in 1965, noted that his ' . . infantryman's instinct rebelled at the small calibre slug.' However, once he spotted his first enemy target he '. . . unslung my M-16 and fired off a quick burst from the hip. Very clearly, I saw two rounds strike the ground in front of him. The third smashed into his shoulder. Lt. Gordon had warned me that the .223 calibre had a wallop, but I wasn't prepared for what I saw. As the bullet slammed into him, it ripped the whole arm and shoulder from his body, spun him around, and rammed him into the ground so hard that he bounced. He was dead from shock even before I covered the 20 yards to him.'

From the first there were a number of complaints about the M-16s jamming in action. Eventually, because of the many complaints, a US Congressional Committee investigated, finding that too often the bolt failed to extract the spent cartridge from the chamber because of the powder's giving off excessive amounts of carbon and smoke. Also, at first, too little cleaning equipment had been issued in the rush to get the new weapons into the troops' hands. The answer to the problem proved to be chroming the chamber, slowing the rate of fire and using a more smokeless powder. Still, the weapon had to be cleaned at every chance possible, and troops in the field also loaded only 18 rounds into the 20-round magazines as another way to stop jamming, by sparing the spring.

Colonel Herbert liked the M-16, which '....was light enough, it fired well if you maintained it, and it was comparable to any small weapon in the world when it was used for the purposes for which it had been designed. All you had to do was clean it once in a while, use the proper lubricant, and open the bolt if it happened to get wet, giving the barrel a chance to drain.'

In the 18th Infantry, Major Carlson reports: 'Each [man] carried one claymore minimum, and a basic load of ammo - 18 rounds instead of 20 per SOP [standard operating procedure]. At least in my company a new incoming soldier, or an old one if he changed his mind, was allowed to choose between an M-16 and an M-14, both of which had selector switches for full automatic fire. "Point" men could have anything they wanted. We often scrounged weapons for point men to experiment with, like Winchester 12-gauge shotguns, M-3 "grease guns" or Thompson sub-machine guns. The predominant favourite was the 12-gauge shotgun or an M-14 with duplex ammo.* None of us could get the 30-round M-16 magazines no matter how much we wanted them.

'90mm recoilless riiles were not carried unless we went out on a one-night ambush in which we got partially carried out by tracks [APCs]. A 90mm was just too heavy to carry. When we did carry it we only brought flechette rounds.

'All of my medics carried a firearm, either .45 cal. pistol or an M-16, by their own choice. I carried a CAR-15 sub-machine gun as a platoon leader, and dropped it for a pistol as a company commander. As a CO I had no use for a rifle, and

A 'recondo' team rigs a 'field expedient antenna' at the MACV Recondo School run by 5th Special Forces Group on Hon Lon Island in Nha Trang Bay. Note leaf-pattern camouflage fatigues; the long-range reconnaissance units were the only units officially authorized to wear them. (US Army)

* Duplex ammo is two magazines taped together end 10 end, so that they could simply be reversed for rapid loading.

Marines of Co. 'B', 1st Bn., 1st Marines fall back across a river after completion of Operation 'Early', south of Da Nang, March 1967. Note USMC fatigue cap worn by the RTO in left foreground. (US Marine Corps)

if I did there would be enough of them laying around.

'Nobody was allowed to carry enemy weapons, because you got to know the sound difference between ours and theirs, and firing one of theirs was a good way to get shot.'

Weapons, as might be expected in a land where war had been raging without end for a whole generation, were easily obtained locally. An 864th lieutenant bought a Thompson sub-machine gun for $40 in a small town near Cam Ranh, while US Army M-2 carbines cost some $30 each in places like Saigon. Aircrew personnel liked revolvers, which they obtained locally, usually from departing men in the same unit who could not take such weapons home. The .357 Magnum pistol was the most popular, although some preferred .45 revolvers. These were usually carried in civilian-type leather holsters worn at the waist.

The Special Forces

On 20 July 1952 the 10th Special Forces Group, the first one in the US Army, was activated with a total strength of one officer, one warrant officer and eight enlisted men. The organization was to grow rapidly. Its purpose was to engage in behind-thc-lines missions. Its men were para-troopers able to fight both day and night, summer and winter, in mountains or in jungles. In 1961 the total strength of the Special Forces was 800, and President John F. Kennedy, taking a personal interest in forging an arm against what were being called 'wars of national liberation'

US Marine wearing flak jacket, leaf-pattern fatigues, and the type of ammunition pouch apparently characteristic of the Marines, starts the outboard motor of a 12-foot barge, used for river patrols. (US Marine Corps)

such as that in Vietnam, ordered both a change in the Forces' mission and an enlargement of their numbers. The 5,000 men who were to serve in the Special Forces were to be given the job of counter-insurgency, including both guerrilla warfare and civic action benefiting the population of wherever they were assigned.

The organization within Special Forces was different from that of other Army units. The basic operating unit was the 'A' Team, made up of two officers and 10 men trained to instruct a 1,500-strong native guerrilla force. One officer was the 'A' Team commander, the other the executive officer. Two enlisted men specialized in communications, two in weapons, and two were medics. If one man were eliminated the other could handle both jobs in their field. At the same time, the 'A' Team could be split into two smaller teams, each with the same capabilities. Each specialist also received training in one field other than his primary one, e.g. a medic might receive communications training.

The major command and control unit in the field was the 'C' Team, made up of 24 officers and senior NCOs. The 'C' Team directed from three to eight 'B' Detachments, each one with 23 officers and NCOs. Each 'B' Detachment controlled four to 12 'A' Teams.

Since the combination of physical and mental abilities required for Special Forces membership was unusual and demanding, promotion for enlisted men came rapidly. The basic, lowest rank was sergeant E5. On the other hand, officers who stayed too long in the Special Forces tended to fall behind their fellows who received more varied assignments. Nevertheless morale among all ranks was extremely high.

Such a unique unit obviously required something special for its dress. In 1954 a committee of officers and NCOs of the 77th Special Forces Group (Airborne), which had been formed only the year before at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, selected a green beret, modelled after those worn by British Royal Marine Commandos since the Second World War. Made by a Canadian company, the special berets symbolized skill, spirit and education. The berets were first worn publicly on 12 June 1955 at the retirement parade for Major-General Joseph P. Cleland. On 30 December 1955 the 77th ordered that all its personnel were to wear the berets with all their uniforms.

The US Army does not like elite units. It does not like to have units marked by special uniforms. Within weeks higher headquarters reacted in horror and issued orders forbidding the wearing of the green beret.

On 11 October 1961 President Kennedy arrived at Fort Bragg for an inspection tour. Lieutenant-General William P. Yarborough, who earlier designed the US Army's paratroop badge, led the President on an inspection of the 5th and 7th Special Forces Groups (Airborne). The men were all proudly wearing their green berets—as previously requested by the President. On returning to Washington, the President telegraphed back: 'I am sure the green beret will be a mark of distinction in the trying times ahead.'

Such overpowering sponsorship was unanswerable. On 8 December 1961 the green beret was made the official headgear for all Special Forces personnel, to wear with all uniforms. The badge

was worn on the beret on a shield-shaped cloth flash over the left eye. The badge consisted of rank badges for officers and unit crests for enlisted men. The crest was approved on 8 July 1960 and consisted of a Fairburn knife, blade pointing up, crossed at the apex of a pair of crossed arrows. A black scroll running from the knife point at the top around the edge bore the silver motto 'DE OPPRESSO LIBER'. An embroidered shield worn under the badge indicated the wearer's unit. The 1st Special Forces Group originally had an all-yellow shield, but added a black border to it after President Kennedy's assassination on 22 November 1963. The 3rd Special Forces Group wore red, black, yellow and white in quadrants. The 5th wore black with a white border, adding yellow and red diagonal stripes while serving in Vietnam. The 6th wore red and black separated by a diagonal white stripe; the 7th, red; the 8th, yellow and blue divided diagonally, and the roth, bright green. The Special Forces troops at the Psychological Warfare Center and Special Warfare School wore black, grey and white with a gold border. The Special Forces Training Group wore white. Special Forces units in the Army's Reserve and National Guards wore teal blue edged white. Special Forces assigned to Special Forces Vietnam wore a yellow diagonal with three red stripes, taken from South Vietnam's flag, with the upper right and lower left corners in blue, the whole edged in white.

The other unique uniform item was the shoulder patch. It was made in the shape of an arrowhead, point up. The background was teal blue with a yellow Fairburn knife in the centre, point up, with three yellow lightning flashes, representing land, sea and air capabilities, running diagonally across the knife. The patch, designed by Colonel John W. Frye in 1954, was topped by the 'AIRBORNE[1] qualification flash.

Other than the beret and insignia, Special

Marines from 3rd Recce. Bn., 3rd Marine Division near Con Thien, February 1969. Ordinary line troops seldom wore the rucksack on operations during which contact was expected. (US Marine Corps)

Forces in Vietnam wore standard Army uniforms. In 1966, however, Special Forces from Detachment B-56 were assigned to one of three Greek-lettered long-range reconnaissance units from the 5th Special Forces Group. Each unit had six reconnaissance teams, each with two Special Forces men and four Vietnamese of Chinese or Cambodian extraction. Each team was put into enemy-held territory to gather intelligence. Special reaction companies, made up both of Special Forces men and Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defence Group members, could be sent in to get the team out of trouble if necessary. In the field men assigned to Project 'Sigma' could wear tiger-striped camouflage fatigues, allowed only to Special Forces among US combat troops. They were usually worn without rank or organization insignia.

Some Reconnaissance team members also carried modified BAR belts because they liked the large magazine pouches on them. Usually one team member also carried an albumin serum, a blood expander kit which could be used for emergency treatment, attached to the rear of his webbing braces. Some CIDG men wore US-style uniforms, usually locally made. Others wore captured or bought Vietnamese clothes, and carried captured weapons and accoutrements. Nothing about them could be traced to US sources.

A reconnaissance patrol member from 3rd Marine Division, January 1969. Note leaf-pattern fatigues, bush hat, and many grenades and canteens clipped to his equipment. (US Marine Corps)

The U.S. Air Force

The US Air Force crews in Vietnam wore the heavy cotton olive green fatigues worn in the Army. Sleeves were cut short and shirts were not tucked into trousers, nor were trousers tucked into the black leather combat boots. Boots were also of Army pattern, as were 'baseball' style olive green cotton caps. Belts were black, with a dulled white metal tip and buckle. Officers wore their rank insignia (which were the same as the Army's except for warrant officers, who wore sky-blue squares on their bars) on both shirt collars.

Both officers and enlisted men wore their names in white block letters on blue tapes the same size as those worn on Army uniforms, over their right shirt pocket. The white letters 'U.S. AIR FORCE' were worn on a blue tape over the left shirt pocket, with qualification badges, such as pilot's wings, above that. Unit patches, embroidered in bright colours and elaborate designs, were usually worn on the right shirt pocket, below the flap.

Non-commissioned officers wore chevrons on both sleeves. These were white, outlined in blue, with a blue circle around a white star in the point of the chevron. The basic airman E1 had plain sleeves. The airman E2 had a single chevron, the airman first class, two chevrons; a sergeant, three; a staff sergeant, four, the bottom one fitting around and underneath the circle and star; the technical sergeant five, the bottom two under the star, and the master sergeant, six, with three under the star. A senior master sergeant wore six with a single chevron rising to a point

US Marines, heavily burdened with flak jackets and extra ammunition bandoliers, carry to the rear captured communist 12.7mm anti-aircraft machine guns. (US Marine Corps)

above, rather like the Army's first Pfc chevron. The chief master sergeant wore six chevrons below and two in a point above. The chief master sergeant of the Air Force wore the same, but with a white wreath around the star within the blue circle.

Many Air Force enlisted men in Vietnam wore olive green bush hats, usually pinned up on one side, often with a blue flash with white letters saying, 'SORRY ABOUT THAT' on the pinned-up brim. This cynical catchphrase was virtually the motto of all troops in Vietnam.

The Air Force, not to be outdone by the Army, raised units of 'air commandos'. They wore in Vietnam tiger-striped fatigues and tiger-striped bush hats. They were allowed to carry any weapon they chose, usually picking M-16s or CAR-15S. Their mission was to call in air strikes, and they often served alone in the bush.

The US Navy

Officers and enlisted men of the US Navy served in a variety of roles in Vietnam. They advised the Navy of the Republic of Vietnam. They maintained their own River Assault Force, a 3,000-man fleet of 'brown water' boats which patrolled the rivers and inlets of Vietnam. They worked on building port projects. And they lent support to the US Marine Corps, which does not have a medical corps and uses US Navy medical personnel.

In combat situations Navy personnel usually

wore Army fatigues, usually with both US Navy and South Vietnamese Navy insignia. They also wore South Vietnamese Navy black berets with a brass badge of a two-masted junk within a circle. They were usually armed with pistols, and weapons like Thompson sub-machine guns or M-16s. In other roles some wore Army or Marine fatigues, while others wore the Navy's fatigue uniform consisting of dark blue cloth visored caps with rank insignia worn on front; light blue denim shirts with a buttoned, Hapless pocket on each breast, and dark blue denim trousers, with black laced boots.

When wearing green fatigues both officers and enlisted men wore metal rank insignia on both collars. Navy officers wore the same insignia as Army officers, but termed their ranks (starting with the ensign, who ranked as an Army second lieutenant) ensign, lieutenant junior grade, lieutenant, lieutenant commander, commander and captain. A commodore would rank as a brigadier-general, but the rank was not used. Otherwise, a major-general was the same as a rear-admiral, and higher ranks were vice-admirals, admirals and fleet-admirals.

Enlisted men wore plain black metal rating insignia on each collar point of the olive green fatigues but coloured, embroidered rating insignia on both sleeves of their blue denim shirts as well as their cap fronts. These came in different colours according to group, and were white on blue for seamen, red for firemen, light blue for constructionmen, and emerald green for airmen. Hospitalmen, dentalmen, and stewardsmen wore white stripes with speciality marks.

The seaman recruit E1 wore a single half-chevron; seaman apprentice, two half-chevrons, and seaman, three half-chevrons. A petty officer third class wore a single chevron, point down, under a pair of crossed anchors, under an eagle with spread wings. The petty officer second class wore the same insignia, with two chevrons; a petty officer first class wore three chevrons. The chief petty officer wore three chevrons, with a single rocker uniting the ends of the top chevron, encasing the crossed anchors on which the eagle sat. The senior chief petty officer wore the same but with a star above the eagle. The master chief petty officer wore the same with two stars. The master chief petty officer of the command wore the same, but with a star instead of crossed anchors within the chevrons. The master chief petty officer of the Navy wore the same with a star instead of the anchors and with three stars above the eagle.

Qualification badges were worn over the left pocket, except for the badges for 'Command at Sea', 'Small Craft' and 'Craftmaster', which were worn over the right pocket. Only one badge could be worn at a time on fatigues.

The US. Marine Corps

The field uniform of the US Marine Corps in 1962 consisted of a set of olive green trousers and a shirt of the same material as those worn by the Army. The trousers were of the Army pattern. The shirts, however, differed from Army ones in having 'fly' fronts. The shirt pocket flap buttons were also hidden. The sleeves were cuffless and the shirt was worn open at the neck, revealing a triangle of white T-shirt. The black letters 'USMC' were printed on the bottom of the left shirt pocket, parallel with and almost touching the bottom seam, while the Corps' globe, eagle and anchor symbol was printed in black above that.

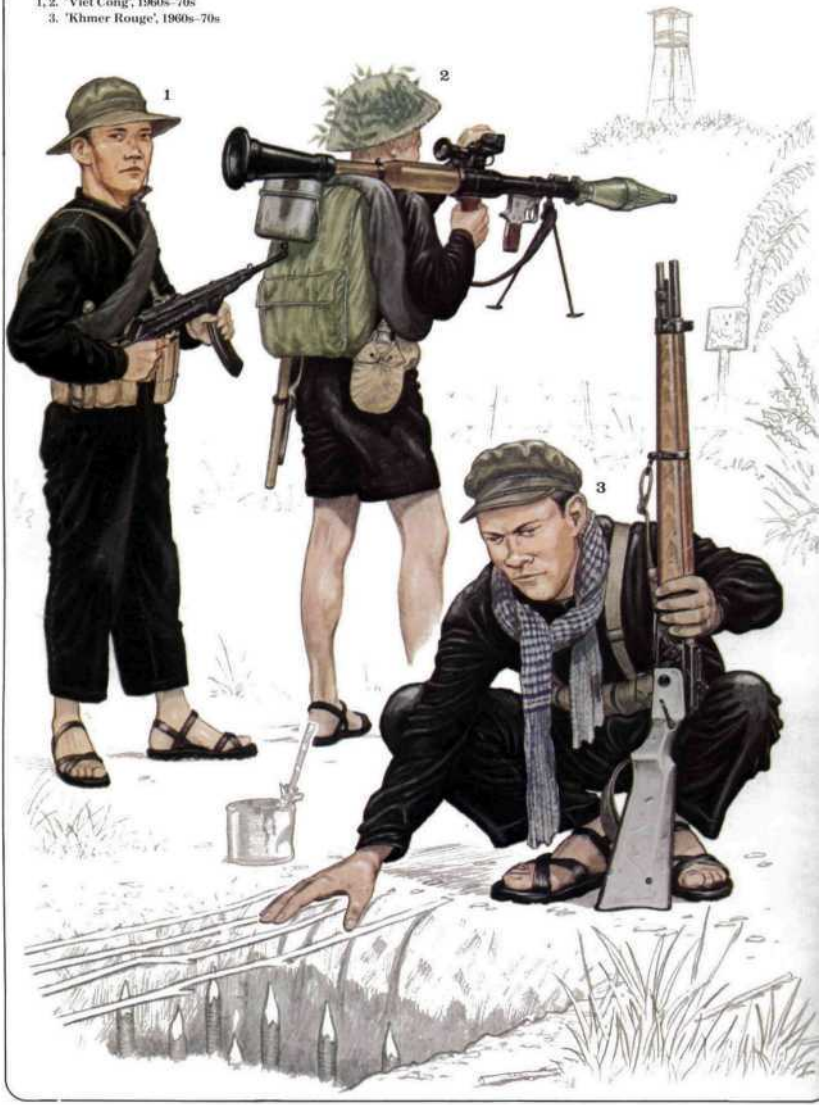
The cap was a soft, olive green canvas cap with a cloth visor and stiffened in front. A black eagle, globe and anchor insignia was printed in black on the cap front. The web belt was light khaki and the buckle was a thin brass frame type, issued black but usually polished bright. Boots were the same as the Army's, and trousers were tucked into them. Rank insignia were worn on both collar points; officers also wore their rank insignia on their cap fronts. Officers' rank insignia were the same as in the Army except for those of warrant officers, who had scarlet squares on their bars.

Enlisted men wore blackened metal collar insignia, which were smaller versions of their sleeve chevrons. These were a single chevron, point up, for a private first class E2; a chevron above a pair of crossed rifles for a lance-corporal;

1. 1st Lieutenant, US Infantry, MACV, 1965
2. 2nd Lieutenant, US Infantry, 1965
3. Corporal 1st Class, ARVN, 1965

A

1, 2. 'Viet Cong', 1960s–70s
3. 'Khmer Rouge', 1960s–70s



1. Sp4, US 864th Engineer Bn., 1965
2. Airman 1st Class, USAF, 1965
3. 1st Lieutenant, US 18th Infantry, 1st Div., 1965

1. Major, US Special Forces, 1966
2. Private, Civilian Irregular Defence Force, 1966
3. Sergeant, US Special Forces, 1966
1
2
3
USA

1. Private, US Marine Corps, 1968
2. 2nd Lieutenant, US Marine Corps, 1968
3. Petty Officer 1st Class, US Navy, 1966
TEXAS
1
2
3

1. Sergeant, Royal Australian Regiment, 1969
2. 1st Lieutenant, Royal Australian Armoured Regiment, 1969
3. Trooper, US Armor, 1969
4. Chief Warrant Officer, US 1st Cavalry Div. (Airmobile), 1970

1. Technical Sergeant, Republic of the Philippines, 1970
2. Private, ARVN III Corps Ranger Group, 1970
3. Captain, ARVN Special Forces, 1970

1. Enlisted man, North Vietnamese Army, 1975
2. Colonel-General, North Vietnamese Army, 1975
3. Marine, North Vietnamese Army, 1975

two chevrons above crossed rifles for a corporal, and three chevrons above crossed rifles for a sergeant. A staff sergeant wore the same three chevrons and crossed rifles but added a single rocker under the rifles. A gunnery sergeant had the same chevrons but two rockers, while a master sergeant had three chevrons, crossed rifles, and three rockers. A first sergeant was in the same pay grade as the master sergeant but had a diamond instead of the rifles between his chevrons and rockers. A master gunnery sergeant had three chevrons and three rockers with an exploding grenade instead of rifles; while a sergeant-major, who was equal in pay grade, had a star instead of rifles.

Marines in Vietnam, however, were not the same as 'state-side' Marines. One of them, William T. Huggett, described how when he got to Vietnam he was shocked by the difference: 'I'd never seen a field Marine before; only state-side, clean-shaven ones with close haircuts, neat uniforms, and quick salutes. But these—they slouched, dirty and ragged, with scraggly beards; each one had a different uniform. Some wore jungle blouses or T-shirts, some just wore flak jackets, some had all three or nothing at all. Most wore enemy souvenirs.'

Lieutenant Philip Caputo, who served in the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade in 1965, wrote: 'The US Army calls the infantry the Queen of Battles, but these worn riflemen looked anything but regal. From the knees down, their legs were caked with dried mud; their old-style leather boots—the new canvas jungle boots had not yet been issued—were rotting on their feet; their web gear, like their uniforms, was faded and frayed.'

Yet Corps brass continuously tried to make the men look 'sharp'. Orders were issued to all hands in 1965 which forbad the 'practice of stripping to the waist while on working parties, patrols, etc. . .' At the same time, 'Marines who had non-regulation cloth name tags sewn above the left pockets of their shirts were to remove them. Henceforth, names would be stamped on in half-inch block letters.' Only squad leaders and above were allowed to grow moustaches in the 5th Marines.

Marine equipment was basically the same as in the Army. When Lieutenant Caputo went on patrol in 1966 he '. . . tightened the shoulder-straps of my pack, heavily loaded with signal flares, smoke grenades, dry socks, a poncho, and three days' rations. An entrenching tool and machete were lashed to its sides. In my pockets, I carried a map, compass, hand grenades, more flares, halizone tablets, malaria pills, and a spare magazine for my carbine. A pistol, two clips of ammunition, knife, first aid kit, and two full canteens hung from my belt. My steel helmet and flak jacket added twenty pounds to the load.' Such heavy loads made it difficult to chase lightly-equipped guerrillas through rice paddies in very hot weather, giving the NLF a real advantage. The Marine issue packs were not liked by many men, as they held less than was needed on typical patrols, and many men traded them to ARVN troops for their packs.

Camouflage helmet covers were often written on with felt-tip pens, with mottoes such as, 'Fragile—handle with extreme care'; 'The colonel smokes pot'; 'Don't sock it to me!'; and 'Do not remove—head attached'. More obscene mottoes were also common. Olive green bush hats were also worn by Marines. Many took puller rings from grenades, twisted a trip-flare wire to a Y-shape across them, and made a peace symbol to hang from their aluminium dog-tag chains.

In the 5th Marines helicopter ground crews were identified by their yellow T-shirts.

Weapons in the Marine Corps were usually somewhat older in design than in the Army, so M-14 rifles were in use generally long after most Army infantrymen had M-16s. Many Marines preferred the M-14, since the Army's experience with M-16 jamming was well known. The Marines also used H-34 helicopters long after most Army aviation units had switched to Huey 540s.

The Kit Carson Scouts

After considerable American pressure, President Diem announced a *chieu hoi* (open arms) programme for communists who wished to defect to the South Vietnamese government's forces. Defectors, or *hoi chanh*, passed an indoctrination course and were then released. In July 1966 the

1st Marine Division organized a number of the *hoi chanh* into the 'Kit Carson Scouts', a unit designed to perform reconnaissance work. The programme worked out so well that in September 1967 General Westmoreland ordered all US divisions, Army and Marine, to organize similar units. The US Navy's River Assault Force, too, organized and used Kit Carson Scouts. When the Americans began pulling out the programme was dissolved and the men joined either regular ARVN units or the Army of the Khmer Republic (Cambodia).

The Scouts were fairly free to wear what they wanted. Most wore either tiger-striped or US green fatigues. Bush hats were the most common headgear, although camouflage-covered US steel helmets were also worn. Insignia were rarely worn, although division shoulder patches were worn by some Scouts, while others wore special flashes. One group headquartered in Tri Ton in 1969-70 wore subdued MACV patches with the black block letters 'KCS' at the top and the town name at the bottom; in 1971 they changed to black flashes bordered red with the words 'KIT CARSON SCOUTS' in two lines, on the left 'TRI TON' and the right 'CHAU DOC', both also in two lines. Scouts also sometimes wore olive green name tags over their right pockets and olive green tags with the letters 'KCS' over their left pockets. Most Scouts, however, wore no insignia at all.

A feast of equipment detail! An RTO of 3rd Recce. Bn., 3rd Marine Division calls in artillery support during a Viet Cong ambush on 13 February 1969. Note the grenades, 'K-bar' and extra canteens festooning bis equipment, and the plastic bag taped round the handset. (US Marine Corps)

South Vietnamese Forces

Being formed, as it was, from former French colonial troops, the ARVN at first had a decidedly French accent. Enlisted men wore light khaki cotton berets, with a badge of a silver circle around a geometric shape superimposed with a flaming sword, all in silver, worn over the right eye. Officers wore light khaki peaked caps with black chinstraps and peaks and an ornate gold cap badge bearing the national coat of arms. Field officers had a single row of gold embroidery on the peak edge, while generals had two rows. For 'dress', or walking out, men wore only khaki shirts and ties with straight khaki trousers and black shoes. Non-commissioned officers wore chevrons above the elbow of the left arm only. A private first class wore a yellow chevron, point down; a corporal, two chevrons, and a corporal first class, two yellow chevrons topped by a single white chevron. A sergeant wore a single white chevron, and a master sergeant, three white chevrons.

Officers wore black shoulderboards on their khaki jackets, which were worn over lighter-coloured khaki shirts and ties. These had a gold stripe running from the button next to the neck to the shoulder seam. Lieutenants and captains wore one, two and three silver 'pips' (in the shape of plum blossoms) on a plain gold stripe; majors and colonels, one, two and three pips on more elaborate gold stripes; and generals, two three, four and five small pips on an even more elaborate gold stripe.

By 1968, with a greatly enlarged army, NCO chevrons were changed, with three chevrons going to the new rank of sergeant first class. Two higher enlisted grades were added, whose bearers wore their stripes on black epaulettes. They were the master sergeant, who had three chevron-

shaped stripes, pointing towards the shoulder seam, with a straight line connecting the ends of the last chevron; and the master sergeant first class, who had three chevron-shaped lines and two straight lines behind them on his epaulette. All enlisted men also received peaked caps instead of berets.

Officers' rank badges were also changed. All officers wore plain black epaulettes bordered in gold. An aspirant wore a line and a 'curl' in gold, resembling British Royal Navy ranking lace. Lieutenants and captains wore one, two and three silver 'flowers'; majors and colonels wore one, two and three over a bar, while generals wore silver stars of the same numbers and in the same arrangements as in the American Army. The new cap badge for all ranks was an American-looking eagle, facing left, over a scroll within a wreath.

In the field Vietnamese troops usually wore snug-fitting olive green copies of US cotton fatigues and black leather combat boots. Embroidered divisional insignia were worn on the left shoulder above chevrons. Vietnamese paratroopers wore cherry-red berets, while troops of the elite Special Forces, the LLDB, wore green berets. In the field rank insignia were worn on both shirt collar points and on cap fronts by officers. Lieutenants and captains wore one, two and three gold 'blossoms', while field grade officers wore one, two and three silver ones. Camouflage-pattern field uniforms were highly popular among ARVN troops, with the 'tiger-stripe' pattern the favourite, although there were almost as many variations as uniform makers.

Accoutrements and weapons were of American make, generally being patterns no longer in use by US troops. In 1965, for example, the M-1 rifle, a poor choice because of its length and weight, was the mainstay of the South Vietnamese Army, while most US troops had M-14S. When American ground troops left Vietnam they continued to supply the ARVN with M-16s, M-79 grenade launchers and M-60 machine guns, as well as helmets and flak vests.

South Vietnam's Air Force wore medium blue peaked caps with a silver eagle insignia on the front, and a black visor. For walking-out dress, jackets, waist-length for enlisted men and hip-length for officers, were authorized but most men wore khaki cotton shirts and trousers. Officers wore black shoulderboards with a small pair of gold wings on either side of the gold button near the neck. Lieutenants and captains wore one, two and three gold 'pips'; majors and colonels, one, two and three silver ones, and generals, two, three and four silver stars.

Non-commissioned grades were indicated by chevrons, which had gold wings and a star on a dark blue field within a white-bordered box

Ranks and insignia of the ARVN, 1966. {US Army)

Vietnamese Title	Translation	United States Equivalent	Rank Insignia
OFFICERS			
Thuong Tuong	Superior General	General of the Army	(1)
Dai Tuong	Senior General	General	(1)
Trung Tuong	Intermediate General	Lieutenant General	(1)
Thieu Tuong	Junior General	Major General	(1)
Chuan Tuong	Sub General	Brigadier General	(1)
Dai Ta	Senior Grade Superior Officer	Colonel	(2)
Trung Ta	Intermediate Grade Superior Officer	Lieutenant Colonel	(2)
Thieu Ta	Junior Grade Superior Officer	Major	(2)
Dai Uy	Senior Grade Junior Officer	Captain	(3)
Trung Uy	Intermediate Grade Junior Officer	First Lieutenant	(3)
Thieu Uy	Junior Grade Junior Officer	Second Lieutenant	(3)
Chuan Uy	Student Officer	None(Cadet Military Academy)	(4)
SinhVien Si Quan	Student Officer Candidate	None (Officer Candidate)	(5)
ENLISTED MEN			
Thuong Si Nhat[6]	Senior Grade Superior NCO	Sergeant Major	(7)
Thuong Si[6]	Superior Grade NCO	First Sergeant	(8)
Trung Si Nhat[6]	Senior Grade NCO	Sergeant First Class	(9)
Trung Si[6]	Intermediate Grade NCO	Sergeant	(10)
Ha Si Nhat[6]	Junior Grade NCO	Corporal	(11)
Ha Si[6]	Low Grade NCO	Private First Class	(12)
Binh Nhat	Private First Class	Private	(13)
Binh Nhi	Private Second Class	Recruit	NONE
Trung Binh	Able Bodied Man	None (Conscript)	NONE

(1) Silver stars.
(2) Silver plum blossoms
(3) Gold plum blossoms.
(4) Gold disc with raised letter in gold.
(5) Gold disc with raised letter in red.
(6) "Si," the Vietnamese term for "student," is also applied to NCO's.
(7) Gold disc.
(8) Silver disc.
(9) Three silver chevrons.
(10) One silver chevron.
(11) One silver, two gold chevrons.
(12) Two gold chevrons.
(13) One gold chevron

Two American officers, left, and two ARVN generals. The man second from right is Major-General Go, ARVN; he wears a noticeably dark green fatigue uniform with ranking on collar points and cap front. He wears US parachutist's wings on his left breast and ARVN wings on his right, above his black on white name tag. The oval shoulder patch is red trimmed with white, with a small white star superimposed on a larger blue one. Right is an ARVN brigadier-general; his uniform, while lighter than Go's, is still noticeably darker than the Americans'. Note different cap shape. His insignia visible here are the star of his rank, and a white and blue shoulder patch of square shape; his belt is dark blue with a brass buckle. The US officers wear 'intermediate' tropical fatigues with exposed buttons. The colonel second from left wears US parachute wings over the 'U.S. ARMY' tape on his left breast and ARVN wings under the black-on-olive name tag on bis right. US parachute wings are worn over his eagle of rank on the cap front. The major or lieutenant-colonel on the left has a green command loop on his shoulder-strap with a unit crest pinned through it. A metal rank leaf is pinned to his helmet cover. (Author's photo)

pointed chevron-style at the top. This was worn by the airman second class. The airman first class had a gold chevron on the top of this box; a corporal had two gold chevrons, and a corporal first class had two gold chevrons topped by a light blue chevron. The sergeant wore an officer's-style shoulderboard with a single light blue chevron in the middle, pointing towards the shoulder seam, while a master sergeant had three chevrons. A warrant officer had a silver button on top of a single silver lace stripe near the end of his shoulderboard, while the chief warrant officer had the same in gold.

When the ARVN changed insignia, so did the Air Force, with all ranks receiving shoulder-boards. The airman second class had a plain black shoulderboard; a single gold chevron was worn by the airman first class on his shoulder-board; two similar stripes identified a corporal, and two gold and one silver, the latter towards the collar, a corporal first class. A sergeant wore two gold chevrons; a sergeant first class, three similar chevrons; and master sergeants and master sergeants first class wore ARVN-type insignia. Officers had their insignia changed to conform to the ARVN.

In the field most Air Force personnel wore olive green cotton shirts and trousers, the shirts tucked into the trousers but the trousers worn loose around their black leather boots, and soft, visored olive green cloth caps with no badges. Officers usually wore their blue peaked caps with their fatigues.

South Vietnam's Navy wore traditional naval garb—double-breasted dark blue jackets showing a white shirt and black tie, or white single-breasted coats with standing collars, for petty officers and officers; and white cotton jumpers with a large naval collar edged with three blue stripes for ratings. Seamen, able seamen and

leading seamen wore one, two or three dark blue chevrons, points down, on the left sleeves of their jumpers. Petty officers first and second class wore shoulderboards with gold chevrons pointing towards their necks topped with an 'executive loop', with two or three stripes. At the time of the general insignia change the loop was dropped and replaced by a silver anchor. Warrant officers and chief warrant officers at first wore a narrow and a slightly wider gold lace topped with an 'executive loop' with a blue band through its middle. This loop, too, was later replaced by a silver anchor.

Officers wore gold lace on their blue coat cuffs and on the shoulderboards of the white coats or khaki shirts. These were topped with 'executive loops', and were one, two and three narrow stripes for ensigns, lieutenants junior grade and lieutenants. Lieutenant commanders, commanders and captains had two, three and four wider gold stripes. Admirals wore plain dark blue shoulderboards with two to five gold stars on the sleeve seam end. When other ranks' insignia were changed, so were officers', bringing them into conformity with the US Navy ranks.

Headgear for seamen was a US Navy-style canvas 'dixie cup' cap, which at first had a blue circular cap badge in front. The badge was dropped when rank badges were changed. Petty officers and officers wore white or khaki peaked caps with black peaks and chinstraps. Originally marine infantry officers wore a plain red star as their cap badge while other navy officers wore two crossed anchors within a wreath. This was later changed to a new badge of a single vertical anchor within an elaborate gold wreath.

South Vietnam's Navy consisted of small, coast-going boats for the most part, and many of the men wore olive green fatigues, shirts tucked into trousers and trousers tucked 'into black canvas boots which looked rather like US leather combat boots. They wore soft green visored caps with the blue circular cap badge in front, or black berets with a circular brass badge bearing the insignia of a two-masted junk on the right side. Officers during most operations wore khaki shirts and trousers, black boots and khaki peaked caps, although they did wear green fatigues at times, too.

AlliedForces

The **Royal Thai Army,** a force of some 80,000 men in three infantry, one mechanized cavalry and one anti-aircraft divisions, as well as other regimental combat teams and an airborne ranger battalion, sent a military advisory force to assist South Vietnam.

The Thai walking-out and dress uniform showed a markedly British influence; for all ranks it consisted of a light olive green shirt under a dark olive green belted tunic with matching trousers, an olive green tie, and a peaked cap with a cloth-covered peak. The belt for the coat was also olive green and had a brass frame buckle; there were four brass buttons down the front, and a small brass button on the flap of each of the four patch pockets.

Officers wore a black cap band with one narrow red stripe along the top edge and a wider one along the bottom. Generals wore three pink

South Vietnam Air Force Band, showing the overall cut of walking-oat and dress uniforms favoured by national forces in the latter stage of the war. These outfits are all white with black ties, and yellow 'ladder-lacing' in their black combat boots. Shoulderboards are black with yellow insignia, buttons brass, the left shoulder aiguillettes are mixed red and yellow, and cap badges are silver. Drum hangings are yellow, the insignia on them being silver edged with red. (Author's photo)

Troops of the Republic of Korea's 'Tiger Division' bring in suspected NLF prisoners, 1967. Weapons visible here are of Second World War vintage, particularly the M-2 carbine *(left)* and Garand M-1 rifle *(right)*. The centre man has a mortar slung on his back. (US Army)

stripes on their cap bands, a wide one on each edge and a narrow one in the middle. The officer's cap badge was a gold and red stylized sun with a red disc in the centre and a gold Thai crown within that. Officers wore gold rank insignia on their yellow-edged epaulettes. Lieutenants and captains wore one, two or three stars; majors and colonels wore a Thai crown, a crown and a star and a crown and two stars, the stars being underneath the crown. Generals wore all-gold epaulettes with a wreath at the edge. Brigadier-generals wore a crown over the wreath and generals higher in rank had one additional star plus the crown for every rank higher than brigadier.

NCO grades were marked for lance-corporals, corporals and sergeants by one, two and three yellow downward-pointing chevrons with a yellow Thai crown in the apex of the chevron, worn on left arms only. The staff sergeant wore a yellow bar and a chevron on his yellow-edged epaulette, the chevron pointing towards his collar. The sergeant first class had two such chevrons, and the master sergeant three, both with a single bar underneath. The warrant officer wore yellow crossed swords on his epaulettes. All enlisted grades wore the same peaked cap as officers, but with a badge without the sun's rays and with an olive green cap band edged with two wide blue stripes. All ranks wore gold branch of service badges on their tunic lapels. The field uniforms and equipment were of American patterns.

The **Republic of Korea's** officers and men wore basically American-pattern olive green cotton shirts and trousers, black leather combat boots and steel helmets. Their weapons and accoutrements, too, were of American design. Officers wore their rank insignia on both collars. A warrant officer wore a gold diamond, while lieutenants and captains wore one, two or three silver diamonds. Majors and colonels wore one, two or three eight-pointed pips. South Korean generals wore the same silver stars as did US generals. NCOs wore red chevrons above the

elbow of both arms. Privates, privates first class and corporals wore one, two or three half-chevrons. Sergeants, staff sergeants and technical sergeants wore two red crossed rifles in the apex of one, two or three chevrons, points down. The master sergeant wore three chevrons, points down, with a rocker over them and crossed rifles between the chevrons and rocker.

Korea's Marine Corps wore the same uniforms as did the Army, although NCOs wore an anchor under the crossed rifles on their chevrons.

Divisional insignia, in the form of shoulder patches, were worn, when authorized, on the left shoulder over the chevrons.

Australia contributed a strong task force drawn from infantry of the Royal Australian Regiment, Centurion tanks of the Royal Australian Armoured Regiment, and supporting units, including elements of the Australian Special Air Service. Field uniforms were of Australian pattern, but very similar to US olive green fatigues; short-brimmed olive green bush hats of British pattern were the normal headgear, and webbing equipment seems to have been a mixture of British and US patterns. Weapons were the FN-type self-loading rifle and Sterling submachine gun, but with the US M-60 machine gun as support weapon. **New Zealand** contributed a small artillery and engineer element which served with the joint ANZ Task Force, and also some RNZAF personnel.

Communist Forces

The **Viet Cong—N**LF—generally wore only the simplest of clothing in the field. The black 'pyjamas' were almost universal, usually consisting of a collarless, half-sleeve or long-sleeved, loosely-cut blouse falling to below the waist, and trousers of the same black cotton material. These were sometimes ankle-length, sometimes cut short, and sometimes reached to, or were rolled up to, mid-calf. The classic footwear was a pair of simple black rubber sandals cut from old motor tyres; canvas 'plimsolls' were also observed. Headgear, when worn at all, usually consisted of either a pith helmet; a fairly shapeless cloth cap with a visor, in green, dark blue or black; or some type of cloth bush hat with a soft crown and a fairly floppy brim. These latter also appeared in black, blue, green or khaki. The traditional palm-leaf 'coolie' hat of the Asian peasant was also worn, although not in action. The pith helmets could be either light khaki or olive green, sometimes with a cloth cover, sometimes with camouflage netting, and in the field were often camouflaged with scrim or foliage. In the latter stages of the war olive green or khaki shirt and slacks sometimes replaced the black pyjamas. A good deal of captured French, ARVN, and—less often, perhaps on account of the great size difference—American military fatigues were used. In the early stages of the war some Japanese uniform items left over from 1945 were still to be seen.

Personal equipment was extremely light and varied. Many variations of the classic Asian communist webbing harness were observed. Normally these consisted of a belt (captured or Eastern bloc web belts, or locally made items of stitched cloth with 'liberated' metal fittings of various patterns) supported by shoulder braces of web or stitched cloth, single or double, worn vertically, crossed on the chest or back, or as a simple loop round the neck. A varying number of ammunition pouches were worn across the front of the belt, usually large, soft items of stitched thicknesses of fabric, usually fastened by thongs or toggles, often curved slightly in manufacture or by use, and large enough to take the 'banana' magazines of the AK series of assault rifles. Some rigs featured small pouches for individual rice rations on each side of the belt, sometimes of waterproof material; others had special pouches for grenades, etc. The basic field ration of rice was otherwise carried inside a 'poncho roll' round the body. Rucksacks or haversacks could be captured items or simple local copies made of stitched fabric. Water canteens were typically oval, modelled on the Japanese type, or American, French and ARVN 'captures', and were carried on the rear of the belt in cloth 'pockets' or cradles of straps. Many old French items such as entrenching tools, mess tins and bags of various types were still used.

Officers of the ROK Marine Brigade confer, guarded by a .30 cal. machine gun team, as their troops prepare to go into action in January 1966. Name tags are worn in white on black above the right pocket, officers wear rank insignia on both collar points, and the RTO in the centre has his rating badge pinned to his shirt pocket flap. (US Army)

Although personal weapons of the Soviet AK-47 series and Chinese-built copies were widely distributed, French and American 'captures' of every vintage from Second World War types up to M-16s were in use throughout the war. Squad weapons tended to be standard Soviet bloc types.

The **North Vietnamese** Army initially wore black pyjamas in the South, but later reverted to olive green shirts and slacks, the former with, typically, long sleeves and two pockets with buttoned flaps on the chest. Quilted jackets of various models were observed in cold weather. The NVA soldier normally wore the olive green pith helmet. Rubber sandals and canvas shoes were both worn and the personal harness was of the same range of types as that of the NLF, although generally the incidence of neat 'factory-made' rigs was higher among these regular troops. Even so, these items had a 'home-made' look to Western eyes, being lightly made of simple materials and fastened with thongs, wooden toggles or buttons, rather than by the patent metal stampings normal on Western equipment. As the war progressed the supply position of both NVA and NLF troops improved, and fuller equipment sets were observed. (By the time of the Vietnam-Cambodia and Vietnam-China clashes of the late 1970s a bounty of ex-ARVN and US items had fallen into communist hands, but basic harness was generally unchanged.) Correspondent Robert Shaplen wrote that: '. . . each man's supplies further consisted of two khaki, green or purple uniforms, a canteen, a canvas bag, a raincoat, a pair of rubber sandals, a pair of boots, a hammock, a blanket, a mosquito net, some halazone water-purification tablets, some quinine tablets, some vitamin pills, a small can of chicken or shrimp, a kilo and a half of salt and seven kilos of rice.'

Officially, collar patches were worn on the open shirt collar rather like those worn on the Second World War Japanese uniform. These were red, with one and two silver stars for privates first and second class; one, two and three stars over a yellow bar for NCOs; one, two, three or four silver stars over a bar for lieutenants and

captains; one to four silver stars over two bars for majors and colonels; and one to four gold stars on a gold-edged patch by generals. The arm of service device, in silver, was to be worn behind the collar patch. In fact, insignia were rarely worn in the field. There was an NLF hat badge of circular shape, horizontally divided red over blue with a gold star set in the centre, which was sometimes seen on pith helmets and soft caps, but by no means universally. The NVA equivalent was all red, with a star in the middle over an arc of cogwheel, flanked by cornstalks, these details being in gold. The NVA troops operating in the South were supposed to wear the NLF badge, but correspondents who witnessed the fall of Saigon report that many did not, and the accents of the troops of the three divisions in the area indicated beyond doubt that they originated around Hanoi. It was in fact a rarity throughout the war to see communists wearing any insignia in the field. (In 1966 a badly wounded communist picked up by men of the 1st Air Cavalry had chalked the word 'Officer' on his shirt front but was otherwise without insignia.) Italian correspondent Tiziano Terzani wrote at the time of the fall of Saigon: 'A puzzle that the Saigonese were never able to figure out was how to distinguish the *bo doi* [NVA] officers from simple enlisted men. It wasn't easy. The uniforms and sandals were all the same, and Saigon had to content itself with the assumption that the more ballpoint pens a *bo doi* had in his pocket, the higher the rank.' Tank troops wore a simple olive overall or shirt and slacks, with the black padded Russian-style helmet. Steel helmets were rarely seen in the South, but were of Soviet pattern.

In the North a Soviet-inspired dress uniform had been regulation since June 1958. Of olive material, it had a single-breasted tunic worn open over a white shirt and black tie, and adorned with shoulderboards illustrated in the accompanying chart. Pockets flapped. It was worn with straight slacks and a peaked cap with black peak and chinstrap. Air Force personnel wore the same uniform but the star-and-cogwheel cap badge was replaced by one with a star over two wings on a sky-blue background. Branch badges were worn on the shoulderboards by personnel other than infantry. Terzani saw the full dress uniform worn by top officers at the Saigon victory parade: 'Major-General Tran Van Tra appeared on the reviewing stand erected on Cong Ly Avenue . . . in a clumsy full dress uniform, a pure Soviet imitation, grey with three stars on the red collar tabs and a gold-braided cap, identical to that of General Van Tien Dung, chief of staff and second only to Giap in the Hanoi military hierarchy.' Generals wore gold shoulderboards piped red with gold rank stars, and lower-ranking officers wore silver stars. NCOs wore grey shoulderboards piped red with red stripes indicating grade. Red collar tabs were also worn, officially at least, on both dress and fatigue uniforms.

China later claimed to have sent up to 300,000 men to aid North Vietnam; although Vietnam later denied the number, they did not deny that Chinese troops had fought alongside their own. The Chinese were specialists, serving as anti-aircraft crews, road builders, railway staff and logistics teams within North Vietnam. All ranks of the Chinese People's Army wore the same dark green uniform, usually without rank identification. A soft-crowned, visored cloth cap of circular outline bore a red cloth star; some officers wore a stamped metal star. The tunic had a closed stand-and-fall collar with plain red rhomboid-shaped patches on each point; the front and the flapped pockets fastened with black buttons. Plain green slacks and black boots completed the uniform. For parade or walking-out a light brown leather belt with a brass buckle-plate stamped with a star was normally worn. Air Force uniforms were identical, but of dark blue instead of dark olive cotton.

The Plates

A1: 1st Lieutenant, Infantry, US Military Advisory Command Vietnam, 1965

The standard fatigues worn in the early stages of the war before the issue of special tropical clothing. Note straight shirt pockets, and the lack of thigh pockets on trousers. The high-lacing black combat boots were also standard at that time. The helmet has a camouflage-printed cover,

slit for the attachment of foliage and with a green elastic band round it for the same purpose. The basic webbing set is worn—pistol belt and braces, with holster for .45 cal. automatic and first aid pack only. Thread versions of the silver rank bar and gold rifles branch badge are worn on the shirt collar points, and name and 'u.s. ARMY' tags on the right and left breast respectively, the former in white, the latter in yellow letters on black. The MACV sleeve patch replaced the old blue MAAG patch with white stars, worn by MAAGs around the world.

A2: 2nd Lieutenant, Infantry, US Army, 1965
This newly arrived officer wears the walking-out or 'Class A' summer uniform authorized throughout the year in Vietnam. The olive sidecap is trimmed with mixed gold and black cord; enlisted men had black trim, and generals wore gold trim. Officers wore rank insignia on the left, and on the right this man wears a patch indicating service with an airborne command. The short-sleeved version of the shirt was worn with collar open, while a black tie was worn with the long-sleeved type, tucked between second and third button. Shoulder patches were not worn on short-sleeved shirts; NCOs did wear their chevrons, however.

This officer wears the sky-blue infantry shoulder cord indicating that he has successfully completed a unit army training programme while in an assigned infantry unit. The green epaulette loops indicate that he commands a unit 'whose mission is to combat the enemy by direct means or methods'. Rank and branch of service badges are worn on his right and left collar points respectively. His name tag is white on black plastic, pinned above the right pocket. Above the left pocket are parachute wings, and an Expert Infantryman badge; this latter was awarded to men who passed a series of proficiency tests. The

Operation 'Ingham', Phuoc Tuy province, December 1966; men of the 6th Bn., Royal Australian Regt. dismount from their M-113 tracks' and move off into the bush. The Australian contingent was notably successful in dominating its area of responsibility. These troops wear a mixture of British and US webbing, and most carry belts of M-60 machine gun ammunition swathed in waterproof material round their bodies. Other visible weapons are the SLR and the M-79. (US Army)

two medal ribbons beneath these qualification badges are the Good Conduct and Armed Forces Expeditionary medals; the first was awarded only to enlisted men after three years of excellent service—this officer thus served in the ranks before being commissioned, which helps explain his rather formidable appearance in such a junior rank. The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was awarded for service in an operation for which no campaign medal was struck, such as in Cuba, October 1962-June 1963, or in the Congo, November 1964.

A3: Corporal 1st Class, Army of the Republic of Vietnam, 1965

The first ARVN uniforms were naturally very French in style, since it was France's colonial army which raised and trained it in the 1950s. The pale khaki cotton beret is very reminiscent of French troops in Indo-China and Algeria in the 1950s; in the period 1953-54 ARVN personnel were photographed wearing it with two tightening tapes hanging at the back in national colours, one in red and the other in yellow. Whether this style lasted into the mid-1960s is unknown. The shirt, tie and slacks are also light khaki, and are worn with silver and gold ranking chevrons on the left arm only, and with a US-style belt.

B1, B2: 'Viet Cong', 1960s-70s

Typical combinations of items of dress and kit, taken from photographs and from captured material displayed in West Point Museum. The black 'pyjamas' and motor-tyre sandals were almost universal, although obviously varying in small details of pattern. Loose sleeves ending just below the elbow were frequently seen on the pyjamas. Headgear illustrated are a cotton bush hat, and the characteristic pith helmet, heavily camouflaged. Such items as belts and straps, pouches for magazines and grenades, the canteen carrier and the knapsack, are locally made from stitched layers of fabric, typically fastened with odd buckles from old Western items or with toggles and thongs. The thin black cotton rolls around the body hold rice rations. The mess tins are French, dating from the 1930s, and the entrenching tool hooked to the belt with a length of

A 'track' of 1st APC Sqn., 1st Royal Australian Task Force, fords a river in Phuoc Tuy province, carrying men of the 6th Royal Australians. (US Army)

rubber is also French issue, being of a type seen in the trenches of the First World War. The weapons are, left, the locally modified version of the 7.62mm K-50 sub-machine gun, a Chinese copy of the PPSh-41 with a skeleton butt, a 'banana' magazine and an unjacketed barrel effectively disguising its ancestry; and, right, the Soviet RPG-7 rocket launcher, widely used as an all-purpose support weapon.

B3: 'Khmer Rouge', 1960s-70s

The Cambodian equivalent of the Viet Cong, active throughout the war against pro-Western forces in Cambodia, and also in direct co-operation with the NVA/NLF against the US and ARVN forces along the border trails. This young killer, busy laying a poisoned *pungi-stake* trap, wears only two items typically Cambodian —a round-crowned soft cap, and the neck towel, which was normally in blue or red and white checks. The other clothing and equipment could be those of any Asian communist force; the weapon is a folding-butt CR.39 rifle left over from the French war of the 1950s, when they were widely used by French airborne troops. From colour photographs.

C1: Sp4, HQ Co., 864th Engineer Bn. (Construction), 1965

One of the first American units to land in Viet-

nam, the 864th received early-pattern fatigue uniforms, including sun helmets. Dark patches on the old fatigues indicate the previous owner's commissioned rank. Note leather and canvas double-buckle boots, sunglasses case on belt, and unit and rank insignia.

C2: Airman 1st Class, USAF, 1965
Army personnel considered Air Force personnel to be pretty sloppy, but the airmen did not seem to worry about it. Dress discipline in the USAF was considerably freer than in the Army, since it was felt that 'bull' would not improve the performance of technical duties. Note short-sleeved fatigue shirt worn outside trousers; trousers were often left to hang loose over boots. The stiff-fronted 'baseball' cap is worn here. Shirt tabs are white on blue, with a coloured unit patch on the pocket below.

Varieties of pouch rigs seen in photos of South-East Asian communist troops. *Top,* NLF, grenade and magazine pouches; *Centre,* NVA, magazine pouches; and *bottom,* a Khmer Rouge rig consisting of loops for captured M-79 rounds. (Mike Chappell)

C3: 1st Lieutenant, 18th Infantry, 1st Division, 1965
The later pattern tropical fatigues, with tilted pockets fastened by hidden buttons, and a fly front. The leather and nylon jungle boots are obviously brand new—after any time in the field the dust or mud rendered them an overall tan, thus the slang name 'boonie buffs'. Metal insignia of rank and arm are worn on the collar here, and the 1st Division's Big Red One' patch is worn in unsubdued form, in red on olive green. The camouflaged helmet cover has an elastic band round it for the attachment of foliage, into which, typically, this officer has forced his plastic bottle of insect repellant. Basic web equipment is worn, with one ammo pouch on his left front and a smaller first aid pack on the right; a green smoke grenade is taped to one suspender, a 'K-bar' to the other, and a fragmentation grenade is worn on the side of the ammo pouch. Note olive plastic canteen stopper. The weapon is the CAR-15, of which the always forthright Col. Herbert wrote: '. . . it was short and sharp and looked good on television or in movies or in pictures for the old family album, but it was, in fact, one hell of a lousy weapon. It misfired, jammed, and just plain did not operate—but it did look good.'

D1: Major, Artillery, US Special Forces, 1966
This major wears the green beret with the intermediate tropical fatigues with exposed buttons. The gold leaf of this rank is pinned through the black, white-bordered beret patch of the 5th SF, with the red and yellow diagonals adopted while serving in Vietnam. The green unit commander's loops on the shoulder-straps appear in the photograph from which this painting is taken to bear silver Special Forces badges. Yellow thread rank and artillery branch badges on olive back-

Gun crew of the 161st Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery, one of them wearing a US steel helmet and the others in Australian-pattern fatigues, roll a 105mm howitzer into a helicopter during Operation 'Ingham', December 1966. (US Army)

ings are sewn to the collar points. Yellow and black 'RANGER' and 'AIRBORNE' flashes are worn on the left shoulder above the teal blue SF patch. The name tag is black on olive, the U.S. ARMY tag yellow on black, and white cloth parachute wings are sewn above the latter.

The weapon at this early date is the .30 cal. M-2 carbine with 'banana' magazine, and a .45 cal. automatic is worn on the belt in its standard brown holster. The brass bracelet on the right wrist is one of those presented as a sign of friendship by the Montagnard peoples among whom the SF often operated, in the course of an elaborate ritual. Cheap Vietnamese-made copies were often bought and worn by men who had never even seen a 'Yard'.

D2: Private, Civilian Irregular Defence Force, 1966
The Vietnamese irregulars recruited to aid the Special Forces in their isolated highland base camps wore a variety of dress, but camouflage patterns were most popular. This Montagnard soldier is taken from colour photographs; his Second World War-style camouflage uniform and American accoutrements are typical, as is the M-3 'grease gun' and magazine pouch.

D3: Sergeant, US Special Forces, 1966
Special Forces personnel in the field were allowed to wear 'tiger-striped' bush hats and fatigues. Insignia were rarely worn, although ARVN rank badges were sometimes displayed hooked to a front buttonhole. For comfort in extreme heat and humidity the shirt is worn loose over the trousers, which are themselves rolled high at the ankle; tucked-in trousers trap water when wading through swamps. The M-16 rifle is carried; web equipment is standard, with the first aid pack fixed to the left shoulder brace.

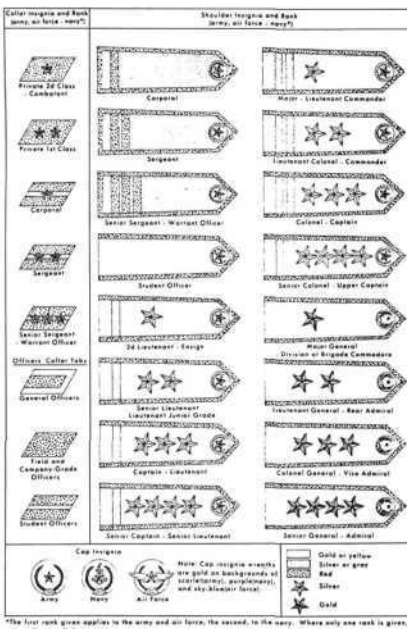
E1: Private, US Marine Corps, 1968
The standard fatigue shirt has the sleeves cut short and rolled. Marine units tended to lag behind the Army in the issue of new patterns of equipment; this man carries the M-14 rifle, and the old pre-war metal canteens, and wears black leather boots. An extra ammunition bandolier is

slung around him. The helmet cover—typically, for a Marine, worn without the elastic band—has been 'felt-tipped' with an indication of his home town and state. Less restrained decorations were widely observed.

E2: 2nd Lieutenant, US Marine Corps, 1968
The visored cloth fatigue cap, of characteristic Marine shape, bears the gold rank bar above the stencilled black Corps badge. Gold rank bars are worn on each collar point of the old-style fatigue shirt, and US Navy pilot's wings are worn on the left breast. Note wristwatch worn through buttonhole; and black leather holster for .45 automatic on right hip.

E3: Petty Officer 1st Class, US Navy, 1968
Navy fatigue dress consisted of two shades of blue denim for enlisted men, and either light khaki or Marine olive fatigues for officers. When assigned to serve with the Vietnamese Navy all ranks wore that force's black beret and junk badge; otherwise, officers wore khaki peaked caps and enlisted men dark blue 'baseball' caps. On brief land operations such outdated weapons as the Thompson were typical.

North Vietnamese ranks and insignia 1966. (US Army)


Collar insignia and Rank (army, air force - navy*)
Shoulder insignia and Rank (army, air force - navy*)
Private 2d Class · Canonyer
Private 1st Class
Corporal
Sergeant
Senior Sergeant
Warrant Officer
Student Officer
Senior Sergeant · Warrant Officer
Officers' Collar Tabs
General Officers
Field and Company-Grade Officers
Student Officers
Corporal
Sergeant
Senior Sergeant · Warrant Officer
2d Lieutenant · Ensign
Senior Lieutenant · Lieutenant Junior Grade
Captain · Lieutenant
Senior Captain · Senior Lieutenant
Major · Lieutenant Commander
Lieutenant Colonel · Commander
Colonel · Captain
Senior Colonel · Upper Captain
Major General
Division or Brigade Commander
Lieutenant General · Rear Admiral
Colonel General · Vice Admiral
Senior General · Admiral
Cap Insignia
Army
Navy
Air Force
Note: Cap insignia worn by officers are gold on backgrounds of scarlet (army), purple (navy), and sky-blue (air force).
Gold or yellow
Silver or grey
Red
Silver
Gold
*The first rank given applies to the army and air force, the second, to the navy. Where only one rank is given, it applies to all three services

F1: Sergeant, Royal Australian Regiment, 1969
The British-style bush hat, shirt, and either shorts or (usually) long trousers were typical of Australian field dress. A large rank brassard is attached to the end of the shoulder-strap and around the sleeve. The weapon is the 7.62mm SLR; the American M-16 was also widely used. Rank insignia followed British Army practice.

F2: 1st Lieutenant, Royal Australian Armoured Regiment, 1969
This Centurion tank troop commander wears Australian-made olive green shirt and slacks, the latter with a single thigh pocket on the left. Slip-on shoulder tabs bear two black silhouette rank 'pips', and the black title 'RAAR' across the end. The black tanker's beret bears the regimental badge in silver—almost identical to that of Britain's Royal Tank Regiment, but superimposed on crossed lances. The rather ungainly mixture of Browning automatic, 1958 holster and 1937 web belt is from a photograph.

F3: Trooper, US Armor, 1969
Typical informal wear for US personnel—bare torso, bush hat decorated with beadwork and slogans, towel, peace symbol, and fatigue trousers with jungle boots.

F4: Chief Warrant Officer W2, US 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 1970
Helicopter pilots like this man were often warrant officers especially trained for this specific duty. The gold rank bar with three brown rectangles is worn on the right collar, the warrant officers' eagle on the left. The 'subdued' divisional patch is on the left shoulder. He carries his flying helmet, and wears one of the several slightly differing versions of 'flak jacket' in service. Helicopter crewmen were sitting targets for ground fire, and generally wore them; ground troops in

the bush found them extremely hot and burdensome and often left them in camp, depending on the type of opposition they faced. Photographs indicate that US Marine infantry tended to wear them more regularly than Army personnel. This pilot wears a typical civilian revolver holster rig with a privately acquired 'six-shooter'.

G1: Technical Sergeant, Republic of the Philippines, 1970

The Philippines sent a 2,000-man contingent to Vietnam in 1966. This Special Forces NCO wears full insignia on the leaf-pattern camouflage fatigues, which were often worn instead of the standard olive green shirt and trousers. The bush hat, regulation headgear, bears a blue and white parachute patch on the turned-up brim, and a yellow and black 'SPECIAL FORCES' flash on the side of the crown; the cords are yellow, and, like all enlisted grades, he wears a circular brass badge on the front. This is repeated on both sides of the shirt collar. Black and white name tags were worn on the left breast. Officers wore branch of service badges on the left collar and ranking on the right. Lieutenants and captains wore one, two and three silver triangles, point up; majors and colonels wore one, two and three gold eight-pointed 'flowers'. Generals wore the same silver stars as their US equivalents.

NCO grades wore dark blue chevrons on Olive Drab backing on both sleeves. Privates wore a dark blue triangle, point up; privates first class, two chevrons over the triangle; and sergeants, three chevrons over the triangle. One, two and three bars were added under the triangle to identify respectively staff sergeants, technical sergeants, and both first and master sergeants; these latter grades were identified further by olive letters 'F' or 'M' in the centre of the blue triangle. Arms and accoutrements were of standard American patterns. This NCO loads an M-79 grenade launcher with a round from a supply carried in an old claymore bag.

G2: Private, ARVN III Corps Ranger Group, 1970

Many versions of camouflage fatigues were worn in the ARVN; this leaf-pattern, similar in design but slightly differing in colours from the US type, was widely worn by Rangers. The use of brightly coloured patches and scarves was typical of ARVN units. The red Roman 'III' on a white circle on the right arm identifies the regional Corps; the tiger and star on a yellow shield is the patch of the Ranger units in general; and the central motif is repeated on the roughly camouflaged American helmet. The tightly fitting fatigues, giving the helmet and boots a look of disproportionate size, are also typical. The M-16 and webbing are from American stocks, as is the radio—note handset taped into a plastic bag.

G3: Captain, ARVN Special Forces, 1970

Taken from a colour photograph of a Montagnard officer, Capt. Do Cao Bo, at An Lac Special Forces camp. The green beret with a badge of silver wings flanking a gold parachute was the distinction of the ARVN Special Forces, the 'LLDB'. The shoulder patch is also the insignia of this organization—a green shield with white parachute, border and lightning flashes, and a yellow and black leaping tiger. The three gold plum blossoms of this rank are worn on both collar points; US and ARVN parachute wings are worn on his left and right breast respectively. The rather sparsely camouflaged fatigues, in two shades of green, are interesting.

H1: Enlisted man, North Vietnamese Army, 1975

Typical NVA *bo doi,* photographed during the final battle for Saigon. He wears only the most basic personal equipment, and would be more heavily loaded on the march; see main text for descriptions. The pith helmet has a temporary cloth cover in this case.

H2: Colonel-General, North Vietnamese Army, 1975

Apart from the grey, Soviet-style parade uniform, NVA generals also had a more Chinese-style everyday uniform in dark olive. The interestingly shaped cloth cap, with NVA badge, is taken from photographs of General Van Tien Dung, who led the final assault on Saigon. The only insignia are collar patches of rank—red patches with gold piping on three sides, and three gold stars.

H3: Marine, North Vietnamese Navy, 1975

Marines were members of the Navy and wore typical naval dress. An alternative to the light

khaki pith helmet was a high-fronted, white-topped sailor's cap, the dark blue band bearing yellow Vietnamese script. Rank was indicated by yellow stripes on the red shoulder-straps of marines. This marine was photographed in front of Saigon's monument to the unknown soldier, which was destroyed after 'Liberation Day'. For variety we have changed his AK-47 for an SKS, another widely used Soviet weapon carried by marines in other photographs.

Notes sur les planches en couleur

A1 Uniforme primitif, porté avant la distribution de la tenue tropicale. Insigne MACV sur la manche gauche; insignes de rang et d'infanterie sur le col; insigne de rang sur la housse du casque; le nom du soldat est écrit sur une patte au-dessus de la poche plaquée droite. **A2** Tenue de ville d'été, portée toute l'année au Vietnam. Insigne des troupes aéroportées et insigne de rang sur le calot; insigne des troupes aéroportées au-dessus des rubans des décorations; le galon vert autour des pattes d'épaules identifie le commandant d'une unité de combat. **A3** L'influence française sur cet uniforme du début de la guerre est bien évidente.

B1, B2, B3 Les vêtements noirs étaient portés partout. Les poches et certains articles d'équipement en tous genres étaient fabriqués en tissu. L'écharpe quadrillée était un signe distinctif des soldats cambodgiens. Les armes sont, respectivement, le K-50 chinois, le RPG-7 russe et le CR-39 français.

C1 Uniforme primitif, casque solaire et chaussures portés par un homme d'une des premières unités qui avaient débarqué au Vietnam. **C2** Insigne en bleu et blanc de l'armée de l'air; casquette de baseball réglementaire à visière rigide; insigne d'unité sur la poche. **C3** Uniforme tropical du deuxième modèle, à poches en biais et boutons cachés. Notez le flacon de produit pour repousser les insectes, porté sous la bande du casque; insignes de rang et d'infanterie sur le col; insigne divisionnaire sur la manche gauche; chaussures de jungle neuves; mitraillette CAR-15.

D1 Insigne de rang épinglé sur l'insigne de l'unité sur le béret; cet écusson noir à rayures diagonales rouges et jaunes identifiait le 5th Special Forces Group. Uniforme de modèle primitif, à boutons exposés. Insigne de manche des forces spéciales, au-dessous des insignes 'Airborne' et 'Ranger'. La carabine M-2 est portée à cette date. **D2** Soldat irrégulier montagnard, portant un uniforme de camouflage fourni par les Etats-Unis et armé d'une mitraillette M-3. **D3** Les forces spéciales devaient normalement être les seules troupes à recevoir l'uniforme de camouflage tigré, mais d'autres se l'étaient procuré.

E1 Les 'Marines' ne portaient pas de bande sur le casque. Des slogans étaient souvent écrits sur les housses des casques. L'équipement des 'Marines' avait tendance à être plus vieux que celui de l'armée; notez le fusil M-14, les chaussures de style ancien et la gourde. Des munitions supplémentaires sont portées dans des sacs à bandoulières en tissu. **E2** Insigne du Marine Corps sur le devant de la casquette de treillis, d'une forme caractéristique; un insigne de pilote d'avion dans la marine américaine se trouve au-dessus de la poche; étui à pistolet en cuir noir. **E3** Treillis naval du type réglementaire avec des insignes de rang sur les manches, porté avec un béret noir de la marine vietnamienne. De vieilles armes comme la mitraillette Thomson étaient typiques de celles utilisées pendant les brèves opérations terrestres de la marine.

F1 Les Australiens utilisaient des uniformes de style britannique et un mélange d'armes et d'équipements britanniques et américains. **F2** Béret noir des soldats de chars, portant l'insigne régimentaire. Les pattes d'épaules portent des insignes de rang et le sigle 'RAAR'. **F3** Tenue typique portée par les soldats américains lorsqu'ils n'étaient pas de service. **F4** Des gilets de protection étaient souvent portés par les équipages d'hélicoptère; notez la version discrète de l'insigne divisionnaire en vert et noir sur le bras gauche et le revolver dans son étui, que le soldat s'est lui-même procurés.

G1 Insignes des 'Forces Spéciales' et des troupes aéroportées sur le chapeau de brousse; chevrons de rang sur les manches. Les armes et équipements étaient fournis par les Etats-Unis; cet homme porte le canon lance-grenades M-79. **G2** Les uniformes de camouflage à dessins de feuilles étaient typiques de ceux portés par les ARVN Rangers. L'insigne des Rangers sur la manche gauche et le casque; l'insigne de III Corps sur la manche droite. **G3** Un capitaine Montagnard, avec le béret vert et l'insigne de la manche de les ARVN Special Forces. Insigne de rang sur le col; l'insigne des parachutistes américains ainsi que celui des parachutistes ARVN sont portés sur la poitrine.

H1 Un *ho doi* typique en tenue de combat légère et casque solaire. **H2** L'uniforme quotidien de style chinois d'un général nord-vietnamien. **H3** Les 'Marines' portaient l'uniforme naval; leur rang était indiqué par des rayures jaunes sur les épaulettes rouges. Il porte le fusil SKS.

Farbtafeln

A1 Frühe Uniform, vor der Ausgabe der Tropenuniform. MACV-Abzeichen am linken Ärmel; Rang- und Infanterieabzeichen am Kragen. Rangabzeichen am Helmbezug; Namensetikett über der rechten Tasche. **A2** Sommer-Ausgehuniform, die in Vietnam während aller Jahreszeiten getragen wurde. Insignien der Luftlandetruppen und Rangabzeichen an der Feldmütze. Abzeichen der Luftlandetruppen über den Ordensspangen. Grüne Schlaufe um Schulterklappe kennzeichnet Führer einer Kampfeinheit. **A3** Der französische Einfluß auf diese frühe Uniform ist unverkennbar.

B1, B2, B3 Die schwarze Kleidung war einheitlich verbreitet. Ausrüstungen und Beutel in vielen Formen wurden aus Tuch angefertigt. Der karierte Schal war das deutliche Kennzeichen der kambodschanischen Soldaten. Die Waffen sind der Reihe nach: die chinesische MP K-50, die russische RPG-7 und das französische Gewehr CR-39.

C1 Anfängliche Uniform, Tropenhelm und Stiefel werden von einem Angehörigen der ersten in Vietnam gelandeten Truppen getragen. **C2** Abzeichen der Air Force in blau und weiß; Standard-'Baseball'-Feldmütze mit ausgesteifter Vorderseite; Abzeichen der Einheit auf der Rocktasche. **C3** Zweite Ausführung der Tropenuniform, mit abgeschrägten Taschen und verdeckten Knöpfen. Interessant ist die Flasche mit Insektenschutzmittel unter dem Helmband. Rang- und Infantrie-Abzeichen am Kragen; Divisionsabzeichen am linken Ärmel; neue Dschungel-Stiefel; Maschinengewehr CAR-15.

D1 Rangabzeichen auf Abzeichen der Einheit geheftet; mit diesem schwarzen Schild mit roten und gelben Diagonalen war die 5th Special Forces Group gekennzeichnet. Frühe Ausführung der Tropenuniform mit ungeschützten Knöpfen. Abzeichen der Spezialtruppe am Ärmel unter den 'Airborne'-und 'Ranger'-Abzeichen. Anfangs wurde der Karabiner M-2 eingesetzt. **D2** Irregulärer Montagnard-Soldat, in US-Tarnanzug, mit Maschinenpistole M-3. **D3** Diese Spezialeinheiten sollten eigentlich die einzigen Truppen sein, an die die 'tiger-gestreifte' Tarnuniform ausgegeben wurde, doch beschaffen sich auch andere diesen Anzug.

E1 Die Marine-Landungstruppen trugen das Helmband nicht. Häufig wurden Slogans auf die Helmbezüge geschrieben. Die Marine-Ausrüstung war meist älter als die des Heeres; man beachte das M-14-Gewehr, die Stiefel alter Ausführung und die Feldflasche. Reservemunition wurde in Patronengurten aus Stoffmaterial getragen. **E2** Abzeichen des Marine Corps vorn an der Marine-Mütze, die eine typische Form aufweist. Abzeichen der US-Marineflieger über der Tasche; schwarze Pistolentasche aus Leder. **E3** Reguläre Drillichuniform der Marine, mit Rangabzeichen am Arm, wird hier mit schwarzem Barett der vietnamesischen Marine getragen. Alte Waffen, wie das Thompson-Gewehr waren typisch während der kurzen Operationen der Marine an Land.

F1 Uniformen in britischem Stil und eine Mischung von britischen und amerikanischen Waffen und Ausrüstungen wurden von den Australiern verwendet. **F2** Schwarzes Barett der Panzertruppen mit Regimentsabzeichen; 'RAAR' und schwarze Rangabzeichen auf den Schulterklappen. **F3** Typische zwanglose Kleidung, wie sie bei Dienstfreiheit von den US-Truppen getragen wurde. **F4** 'Flak'-Jacken waren weitverbreitet bei den Hubschrauber-Besatzungen; von Interesse sind die Divisionsabzeichen in 'gedecktem' Grün und Schwarz am linken Arm sowie der Privat-Revolver mit Halfter.

G1 Abzeichen der 'Special Forces' und Luftlandetruppen an der Buschmütze; Armwinkel zur Rangkennzeichnung. Waffen und Gerät stammen aus US-Lieferungen. Dieser Mann hält ein Gewehrgranatengerät M-79. **G2** Tarnanzug mit 'Blattmuster' war typisch für die ARVN Rangers. Rangers-Abzeichen am linken Ärmel und am Helm wiederholt; am rechten Ärmel Kennzeichen des III Corps. **G3** Ein Montagnard-Hauptmann mit grünem Barett und Ärmelabzeichen der ARVN Special Forces. Rangabzeichen am Ärmel; die Abzeichen der US- sowie ARVN-Fallschirmjägertruppe werden auf der Brust getragen.

H1 Typischer *bo doi* in leichter Kampfausrüstung und mit Tropenhelm. **H2** Die typische Alltagsuniform eines nordvietnamesischen Generals; die Uniform ist in chinesischem Stil. **H3** Die Marine-Landungstruppen trugen Marine-uniformen; der Rang wurde mit gelben Streifen auf den roten Schulterklappen gekennzeichnet. Der Soldat trägt das SKS-Gewehr.

Men-at-Arms Series Titles in Print

ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL PERIODS:

(218) Ancient Chinese Armies
(109) Ancient Middle East
(137) The Scythians 700–300 B.C.
(69) Greek & Persian Wars 500–323 B.C.
(148) Army of Alexander the Great
(121) Carthaginian Wars
(46) Roman Army:
(1) Caesar–Trajan
(93) (2) Hadrian–Constantine
(129) Rome's Enemies:
(1): Germanics & Dacians
(158) (2): Gallic & British Celts
(175) (3): Parthians & Sassanids
(180) (4): Spain 218–19 B.C.
(154) Arthur & Anglo-Saxon Wars
(125) Armies of Islam, 7th–11th C
(150) The Age of Charlemagne
(89) Byzantine Armies 886–1118
(85) Saxon, Viking & Norman
(73) Armies of the Crusades
(171) Saladin & the Saracens
(155) Knights of Christ
(200) El Cid & Reconquista 1050–1492
(105) The Mongols
(222) The Age of Tamerlane
(50) Medieval European Armies
(151) Scots & Welsh Wars 1250–1400
(94) The Swiss 1300–1500
(136) Italian Armies 1300–1500
(166) German Armies 1300–1500
(195) Hungary & E. Europe 1000–1568
(140) Ottoman Turks 1300–1774
(210) Venetian Empire 1200–1670
(111) Crécy and Poitiers
(144) Medieval Burgundy 1364–1477
(113) Armies of Agincourt
(145) Wars of the Roses
(99) Medieval Heraldry

16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

(191) Henry VIII's Army
(58) The Landsknechts
(101) The Conquistadores
(14) English Civil War Armies
(110) New Model Army 1645–60
(203) Louis XIV's Army
(97) Marlborough's Army
(86) Samurai Armies 1550–1615
(184) Polish Armies 1569–1696 (1)
(188) Polish Armies 1569–1696 (2)

18TH CENTURY

(118) Jacobite Rebellions
(48) Wolfe's Army
(39) Brit. Army in N. America

NAPOLEONIC PERIOD

(87) Napoleon's Marshals
(64) Nap's Cuirassiers & Carabiniers
(55) Nap's Dragoons & Lancers
(68) Nap's Line Chasseurs
(76) Nap's Hussars
(83) Nap's Guard Cavalry
(141) Nap's Line Infantry
(146) Nap's Light Infantry
(153) Nap's Guard Infantry (1)
(160) Nap's Guard Infantry (2)
(90) Nap's German Allies (3)
(106) Nap's German Allies (4)
(122) Nap's German Allies (5)
(199) Nap's Specialist Troops
(211) Nap's Overseas Army
(88) Italian & Neapolitan Troops
(176) Austrian Army (1): Infantry
(181) Austrian Army (2): Cavalry
(223) Austrian Specialist Troops
(152) Prussian Line Infantry
(149) Prussian Light Infantry
(192) Prussian Reserve & Irregulars
(162) Prussian Cavalry 1792–1807
(172) Prussian Cavalry 1807–15
(185) Russian Army (1): Infantry
(189) Russian Army (2): Cavalry
(114) Wellington's Infantry (1)
(119) Wellington's Infantry (2)
(126) Wellington's Light Cavalry
(130) Wellington's Heavy Cavalry
(204) Wellington's Specialist Troops
(167) Brunswick Troops 1809–15
(206) Hanoverian Army 1792–1816
(96) Artillery Equipments

19TH CENTURY

(173) Alamo & Texan War 1835–6
(56) Mexican–American War 1846–8
(63) American–Indian Wars 1860–90
(170) American Civil War Armies:
(1): Confederate
(177) (2): Union
(179) (3): Staff, Specialist, Maritime
(190) (4): State Troops
(207) (5): Volunteer Militia
(37) Army of Northern Virginia
(38) Army of the Potomac
(163) American Plains Indians
(186) The Apaches
(168) US Cavalry 1850–90
(193) British Army on Campaign:
(1): 1816–1853
(196) (2): The Crimea, 1854–56
(198) (3): 1854–81
(201) (4): 1882–1902
(212) Victoria's Enemies
(1): Southern Africa
(215) (2): Northern Africa
(219) (3): India
(224) (4): Asia
(67) The Indian Mutiny
(57) The Zulu War
(59) Sudan Campaigns 1881–98
(95) The Boxer Rebellion

THE WORLD WARS

(80) The German Army 1914–18
(81) The British Army 1914–18
(208) Lawrence and the Arab Revolts
(182) British Battle Insignia:
(1) 1914–18
(187) (2) 1939–45
(117) The Polish Army 1939–45
(112) British Battledress 1937–61
(225) The Royal Air Force
(70) US Army 1941–45
(216) The Red Army 1941–45
(220) The SA 1921–45
(24) The Panzer Divisions
(34) The Waffen-SS
(213) German M.P. Units
(139) German Airborne Troops
(131) Germany's E. Front Allies
(103) Germany's Spanish Volunteers
(147) Wehrmacht Foreign Volunteers
(142) Partisan Warfare 1941–45
(169) Resistance Warfare 1940–45

MODERN WARFARE

(132) Malayan Campaign 1948–60
(174) The Korean War 1950–53
(116) The Special Air Service
(156) The Royal Marines 1956–84
(133) Battle for the Falklands:
(1): Land Forces
(134) (2): Naval Forces
(135) (3): Air Forces
(127) Israeli Army 1948–73
(128) Arab Armies 1948–73
(194) Arab Armies (2): 1973–88
(165) Armies in Lebanon 1982–84
(104) Vietnam War Armies 1962–75
(143) Vietnam War Armies (2)
(209) War in Cambodia 1970–75
(217) War in Laos 1960–75
(183) Modern African Wars:
(1): Rhodesia 1965–80
(202) (2): Angola & Mozambique
(159) Grenada 1983
(178) Russia's War in Afghanistan
(221) Central American Wars

GENERAL

(107) British Infantry Equipts. (1)
(108) British Infantry Equipts. (2)
(138) British Cavalry Equipts.
(214) US Infantry Equipts.
(205) US Army Combat Equipts.
(157) Flak Jackets
(123) Australian Army 1899–1975
(164) Canadian Army at War
(161) Spanish Foreign Legion
(197) Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Please note that for space reasons abbreviated titles are given above; when ordering, please quote the title number given in brackets, e.g. 'MAA 109' for 'Ancient Armies of the Middle East', etc.

ISBN 0-85045-360-7

Avec annotations en francais sur les planches en couleur
Mit Aufzeichnungen auf deutsch uber die Farbtafeln